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The Redeemer.



CHAPTER III.

Peculiar transactions of this Apostle, from the time of his being chosen, to his blessed Master's entering the city of Jerusalem.

THE blessed Jesus having entered upon his important mission, thought proper to select some particular persons from among his followers, to be constant witnesses of his miracles and doctrine, and who, after his departure, might be entrusted with the care of building his church, and planting that religion in the world for which he himself left the mansions of heaven, and put on the veil of mortality. In order to this, he withdrew privately, in the evening, to a solitary mountain, where he spent the night in solemn addresses to his Almighty Father, for rendering the great work he was going to undertake prosperous and successful.

Early the next morning the disciples came to him, of whom he made choice of twelve to be his apostles, and the attendants on his person.

These he afterwards invested with the power of working miracles, and sent them into different parts of Judea, in order to carry on with more rapidity the great work which he himself had so happily begun.

All the evangelists, in their enumeration of these apostles, constantly place St. Peter first. But we must not on that account suppose that St. Peter was invested with any personal prerogative above his brethren: none of them ever intimated any such thing; and St. Paul says expressly that he himself was not inferior to the very chiefest apostle.

Soon after this election, the blessed Jesus, attended by Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, followed Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, to his house, in order to restore his daughter, an only child, who lay at the point of death; but before their arrival a messenger reached them with the news that the damsel was dead, and therefore it was unnecessary for our Saviour to give himself any farther trouble. But our blessed Lord bid the ruler not despair; for, if he believed, his daughter should yet be restored to her former health. And accordingly, on his arrival, he took the maid by the hand, and with the power of a word recalled her fleeting spirit, which had quitted its earthly tabernacle, and restored her again to life and health.

We have no farther account of St. Peter in particular, till the night after our Saviour's miraculously feeding the multitude in the wilderness. Jesus had ordered his

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disciples to take ship, and pass over to the other side, while he sent the multitude away. But a violent storm arising, they were in great danger of their lives; when their great Master came unto them, walking on the surface of the boisterous billows, with the same ease as if it had been dry ground.

At his approach the disciples were greatly terrified, supposing they had seen a spirit. But their compassionate Master soon dispelled their fears, by telling them it was he himself, and therefore they had no reason to be terrified.

Peter, who was always remarkable for bold resolutions, desired his Master to give him leave to come to him on the water; and on obtaining permission, he left the ship, and walked on the sea, to meet his Saviour. But when he heard the deep roar around him, and saw the waves increase, he began to be afraid; and as his faith declined, his body sank in the water; so that in the greatest agony he called for assistance to him that was able to save. Nor was his cry in vain; the compassionate Redeemer of mankind stretched out his hand, and again placed him on the surface of the water, with this gentle reproof, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" And no sooner was the blessed Jesus and his disciple entered into the ship, than the winds ceased, the waves subsided, and the ship was at the land whither they were going.

A miracle of this kind could not fail of astonishing the disciples, and convincing them of the divinity of his mission; accordingly they drew near and worshipped him, with this confession, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

The next day our blessed Saviour entered the synagogue of Capernaum; and, from the miracle of the loaves, took occasion to discourse concerning himself, the true manna, and the "bread which came down from heaven;" opening to them the more sublime and spiritual mysteries of the gospel; on which great part of the audience, who expected he was going to erect a temporal kingdom, and re-establish the throne of David in Jerusalem, offended at his representing his dominion as entirely spiritual, departed from him, and came no more to hear his discourses. Jesus, on beholding this defection, turned himself towards his disciples, and asked them whether they also would go away? To which Peter replied, "Lord, whither shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." To whom should we apply for life and salvation? "thou art the way, the truth, and the life."

The inhabitants of Judea, who

beheld with astonishment the miracles wrought by the blessed Jesus, had formed many conjectures concerning him. Our great Redeemer was not ignorant of this; but being willing to hear what account his disciples would give of the various opinions of the people, asked them what the world said concerning him? To which they replied, that some took him for John the Baptist risen from the dead; some thought him to be Elias, and others Jeremiah, or one of the old prophets. He asked them, what they themselves thought of him? To which Peter, in the name of the rest, answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," anointed and set apart by the Most High, to be the great King, Priest, and Prophet, of Israel.

This full and comprehensive declaration of Peter satisfied the inquiry of our blessed Saviour, who answered, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." That is, this faith which thou hast now confessed is not human, or built upon the testimony of man, but upon that knowledge which I was sent from God to reveal unto the world; therefore I say also unto thee, "that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." As thy name signifies a rock, so shalt thou prove firm, solid, and immovable, in building my church, which shall be so firmly established by thy care and diligence, upon the faith thou hast now professed, that all the assaults of men and devils shall not be able to destroy it.

The disciples had no idea that their Master was to suffer death for the sins of the world; on the contrary, they considered him as immortal, having imbibed the opinion of the Scribes and Pharisees, "that Christ abideth for ever:" so that when the blessed Jesus told them of the sufferings he must undergo at Jerusalem, what affronts and indignities he must suffer, and be at last put to death, with all the acts of torture and disgrace, by a sentence of the Jewish sanhedrim, Peter, who could not endure the thought of his Master's suffering the least punishment, much less those cruelties he had mentioned, and at last death itself, interrupted him very unseasonably, and said, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." He considered these sufferings as inconsistent with the character of the great Messiah, whom he expected would restore the splendour of the throne of David his father, and reduce all the kingdoms of the earth to his obedience. But

our blessed Saviour, who came down from heaven to give his life a ransom for the sins of the world, and who valued the redemption of mankind infinitely more than his own ease and safety, highly resented this speech of St. Peter, and accordingly returned this sharp reproof: "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence to me." Thy pernicious counsel, in seeking to oppose the design for which I purposely left the courts of heaven, is offensive; and thou "savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Some time after, the great Redeemer of the souls of men, being about to receive a specimen of his future glorification, took with him three of his most intimate apostles, Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and went up into a very high mountain; and while they were employed in earnest addresses to the Almighty, he was transfigured before them, darting such lustre from his face, as exceeded the meridian rays of the sun in brightness; and such beams of light issued from his garments, as exceeded the light of the clearest day; an evident and sensible representation of that state when the "just shall walk in white robes, and shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." During this heavenly scene, the great prophets Moses and Elias appeared in all the brightness and majesty of a glorified state, familiarly conversing with him, and discoursing of the death and sufferings he was shortly to undergo, and his ascension to the heavenly regions of bliss and happiness.

In the meantime, Peter and the two apostles were fallen asleep; but on their awaking were strangely surprised to see the Lord surrounded with so much glory, and those two great persons conversing with him. They, however, remained silent till those visitants from the courts of heaven were going to depart, when Peter, in rapture and ecstacy of mind, addressed himself to his Master, declaring their infinite pleasure and delight in being favoured with this glorious spectacle; and desired his leave to erect three tabernacles, one for him, one for Moses, and one for Elias. But while he was speaking a bright cloud overshadowed these two great prophets, and a voice came from it, uttering these remarkable words; "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." On which the apostles were seized with the utmost consternation, and fell upon their faces to the ground; but Jesus touching them, bid them dismiss their fears, and look up with confidence: they immediately obeyed, but saw their Master only.

After this heavenly scene, our blessed Lord travelled through Galilee; and at his return to Capernaum the tax-gatherers came to Peter, and asked him whether his Master was not obliged to pay tribute? When our blessed Saviour was informed of this demand, rather than give offence, he wrought a miracle to pay it. Our great Redeemer was now going, for the last time, to Jerusalem; and he ordered two of his disciples, probably Peter and John, to fetch him an ass, that he might enter into the city on it, as had been foretold. The disciples obeyed their Master, and brought the ass to Jesus, who being mounted thereon, entered the city amidst the hosannas of a numerous multitude, with palm-branches in their hands, proclaiming at once both the majesty of a Prince and the triumph of a Saviour.

CHAPTER IV.

Life of St. Peter from the time of the celebration of the last Passover to the crucifixion of the great Redeemer.

THE blessed Jesus proceeded from Jerusalem to Bethany, whence he sent two of his disciples, Peter and John, to make preparations for his celebrating the passover.

Everything being prepared, our blessed Saviour and his apostles entered the house, and sat down to table. But their great Master, who often taught them by example as well as precept, arose from his seat, laid aside his upper garment, took the towel, and pouring water into a bason, began to wash his disciples' feet, to teach them humility and charity by his own example. But on his coming to Peter, he would by no means admit his Master to perform so mean and condescending an office. What! the Son of God stoop to wash the feet of a sinful mortal! A thought which shocked the apostle, who warmly declared, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." But the blessed Jesus told him, that if he washed him not, he could have no part with him; intimating that this action was mystical, and signified the remission of sins, and the purifying virtue of the Spirit of the Most High, to be poured upon all true Christians. This answer sufficiently removed the scruples of Peter, who cried out, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Wash me in every part, rather than let me lose my portion in thee.

The blessed Jesus, having set this pattern of humility, began to reflect on his approaching sufferings, and on the person who should betray

him into the hands of wicked and cruel men, telling them that not a stranger or an enemy, but one of his friends, one of his apostles, and even one of them who then sat at the table with him, would betray him.

This declaration exceedingly affected them all in general, and Peter in particular, who made signs to St. John to ask him particularly who it was? Jesus complied with this request, and gave them to understand that it was Judas Iscariot.

Our great Redeemer now began the institution of his Supper, that great and solemn institution, which he resolved to leave behind him, to be constantly celebrated in his church, as a standing monument of his love in dying for mankind; telling them at the same time that he himself was now going to leave them, and that "whither he went, they could not come." Peter, not well understanding what he meant, asked him whither he was going? To which our great Redeemer replied, that he was going to that place whither he could not now, but should hereafter, follow him; intimating the martyrdom he was to suffer for his Master's religion. Peter answered, that he was ready now to follow him, even if it required him to lay down his life. This confident presumption was not at all agreeable to the blessed Jesus, who told him he had promised great things, but would be so far from performing them, that before "the cock crew" he would deny him thrice.

Supper being now ended, they sung a hymn and departed to the mount of Olives; where Jesus again put them in mind how greatly the things he was going to suffer would offend them. To which Peter replied, that "though all men should be offended because of him, yet he himself would never be offended." How far will an indiscreet zeal and affection transport even a well-meaning man into vanity and presumption! Peter questions the fidelity of others, but never doubts his own; though his lord had just before reproved him for his self-sufficiency. This confidence of Peter inspired the rest of the apostles with courage; so that they declared their constant and unshaken adherence to their Master.

They now repaired to the garden of Gethsemane; and leaving the rest of the apostles near the entrance, our blessed Saviour, taking with him Peter, James, and John, retired into the most solitary part of the garden, to enter on the preparatory scene of the great tragedy that was now approaching.

Here the blessed Jesus laboured under the bitterest agony that ever human nature suffered, during which

he prayed with the utmost fervency to his heavenly father, "offering up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground."

While our blessed Redeemer was thus interceding with the Almighty, his three disciples were fallen asleep, though he had made three several visits to them; and calling to Peter, asked him if he could not watch one hour with him? Advising them all to watch and pray, that they might not enter into temptation; adding, "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

What incomparable sweetness, what generous candour, did the Redeemer of mankind display on this occasion! He passed the most charitable censure upon an action, which malice and ill-nature would have painted in colours as black as the shades of darkness.

The disciples were drowned in a profound security, and were buried in a deep sleep, and though repeatedly awaked and informed of the approaching tragedy, they little regarded the admonitions, as if nothing but ease and softness engaged their thoughts; an action which seemed to imply the most amazing ingratitude, and the highest disregard for their Lord and Master.

But he, who was compassion itself, would not impute it to their want of affection, or disregard for his safety; he considered it merely as the effect of their infirmities, and made an excuse for them when they could make none for themselves: teaching us the useful lesson of putting the most favourable construction on the actions of others; and to imitate the bee, and not the adder, by sucking honey, instead of poison, from the various transactions of human life.

While he was discoursing with them, a band of soldiers, from the chief priests and elders, preceded by the traitor Judas, to conduct and direct them, rushed into the garden, and seized the great High Priest of our profession. Peter, whose ungovernable zeal would admit of no restraint, drew his sword, and, without the least order from his Master, struck at one of the persons who seemed to be remarkably busy in binding Jesus, and cut off his right ear. This wild and unwarrantable zeal was very offensive to his Master, who rebuked Peter, and entreated the patience of the soldiers while he miraculously healed the wound.

But now the fidelity of the apostles, which they had urged with so much confidence, was put to the trial. They saw their Master in the hands of a rude and incon-

siderate band of men; and therefore should have exerted their power to release him, or at least to have been the companions of his sufferings, and endeavoured, by every kind and endearing action, to have lessened his grief. But, alas! instead of assisting or comforting their great Master, they forsook him and fled.

The soldiers, after binding Jesus, led him away, and delivered him to the chief priests and elders, who carried him from one tribunal to another, first to Annas, and then to Caiaphas, where the Jewish sanhedrim were assembled, in order to try and condemn him.

In the meantime Peter, who had followed the other disciples in their flight, recovered his spirits, and, being encouraged by his companion, St. John, returned to seek his Master. Seeing him as he was led to the high priest's hall, he followed at a distance, to know the event; but on his coming to the door, was refused admittance, till one of the disciples, who was acquainted there, came out, and prevailed upon the servant who kept the door to let him in. Peter being admitted, repaired to the fire burning in the middle of the hall, round which the officers and servants were standing; where being observed by the maid-servant who let him in, she charged him with being one of Christ's disciples; but Peter publickly denied the charge, declaring he did not know him, and presently withdrew into the porch, where, being secluded from the people, the reflection of his mind awakened his conscience into a quick sense of his duty, and the promise he had a few hours before made to his Master. But, alas! human nature, when left to itself, is remarkably frail and inconstant. This Peter sufficiently experienced; for while he continued in the porch, another maid met him and charged him with being one of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth; which Peter firmly denied, and, the better to gain belief, ratified it with an oath.

About an hour after this, the servant of the high priest, he whose ear Peter had cut off, charged him with being a disciple of Christ, and that he himself had seen him in the garden with him; adding, that his very speech sufficiently proved that he was a Galilean. Peter, however, still denied the fact; and added to his sin, by ratifying it not only with an oath, but a solemn curse and execration, that "he was not the person," and that "he knew not the man." But no sooner had he uttered this denial (which was the third time) than "the cock crew;" at which his Master turned about, and earnestly looked upon him in a manner that pierced him

to the heart, and brought to his remembrance what his Saviour had more than once foretold, namely, that he would basely and shamefully deny him. Peter was now no longer able to contain his sorrow; he flew from the palace of the high-priest, and "wept bitterly," passionately bewailing his folly, and the aggravations of his sin.

The fall of St. Peter should convince us of the frailty of men, and effectually subdue those vain confidences which are apt to rise in our hearts, from our own supposed strength and firmness. For, as this great disciple fell in so scandalous a manner, who shall hereafter dare to depend upon the highest degree of knowledge, when one so wise, so perfectly satisfied of the truth of the Christian doctrine, was, after the fullest convictions of his own conscience, so weak and frail as to deny and abjure his Lord, who instructed and bought him even at the price of his own blood? Who shall presume upon his best resolutions, when he, who declared so firm a purpose of adhering to Jesus, did within a few hours peremptorily and solemnly disown that very person, for whose sake he was lately ready and disposed to lay down his life?

We ought, therefore, on all occasions, to pray for and rely on the divine assistance, which can alone enable us to stand in a day of trial. There is, indeed, no reason to doubt that St. Peter at that time spoke the very sense of his soul; that he had an honest and sincere heart, was steadfastly determined, and as he thought able, to perform what with so much piety and affection he intended and professed. But his blame was, that he did not consider the infirmities of human nature, promising, in the warmth of his zeal, more than he was able to perform. He relied on his own integrity, thinking good resolutions a sufficient defence against the most violent temptations. But when the assault was made, and danger, with her terrifying aspect, appeared, the event sufficiently proved, that how willing soever the spirit might be, yet the flesh was exceedingly frail and weak.

We have in St. Peter a warning for our instruction. The opinion of his own strength proved his ruin. So dangerous and fatal is it to lean on our own understandings; to be wise, good, and safe in our own conceit; when all our sufficiency, all our safety, is of God.

We should also, from his conduct, remember the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty, in causing the faults and infirmities of his saints to be recorded in the holy Scriptures, and the use we ought to make of

their failings and temptations. Their eminent perseverance in the cause of Christ, and their as eminent repentance when they did amiss, are written as a seasonable warning, and exhibit an instance of humiliation to all future ages; by letting us see that men are but men, subject to blemishes and imperfections; and that the highest and purest state, without continued aid, is no security from danger. This should make us very tender how we judge and despise our brethren, whose faults, however severely we may censure them, might probably have been our own, had we been in their circumstances; for "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

We should not then promise ourselves such safety and freedom from temptations, in any circumstances of life, as to think we are incapable of committing the blackest crimes, should the Almighty withdraw his grace, and leave us to ourselves

And as their failings admonish, so they should also comfort us, by demonstrating that God does not suddenly cast off his servants, when they have heinously offended him: that we ought not to despair, though our transgressions are great and many; for if we will return with true contrition of soul, we shall be kindly received, and freely pardoned. Those who fall with him should earnestly pray for that repentance which he had; a "repentance which was unto salvation, and needed not to be repented of."

CHAPTER V.

An account of what befel this Apostle, from the Resurrection of his blessed Master, to his Ascension into Heaven

IT is certain, from various circumstances, that Peter, after the crucifixion of his Lord and Master, stayed at Jerusalem, or at least in the neighbourhood: for when Mary Magdalene returned from the sepulchre, to inform the disciples that the stone was rolled away from the door, and the body not to be found, Peter and John set out immediately towards the garden. John, who was the younger, arrived first at the sepulchre, looked into it, but did not enter, either out of fear, or reverence to our Saviour. Peter came soon after, and resolutely went into the sepulchre, where he found the linen clothes lying together in one place, and the napkin that was about his head wrapped in another, a sufficient indication that the body was not stolen away; for had that been the case so much care and order would not have been observed in disposing of the linen clothes.

But Peter did not wait long in suspense, with regard to his great

Lord and Master, for the same day Jesus appeared to him; and as he was the first of the disciples who had made a signal confession of the divinity of the Messiah's mission, so it was reasonable he should first of the apostles see him after his resurrection; and at the same time to convince him that the crime he had been guilty of in denying him was pardoned, and that he was come, like the good Samaritan, to pour oil into the wounded conscience.

Soon after the apostles prepared to obey the command of their great Master, of retiring into Galilee; and we find that Peter, Nathanael, the two sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples, returned to their old trade of fishing on the lake.

One morning early, as they were labouring at their employment, having spent the whole night to no purpose, they saw on the shore a grave person, who called to them, and asked them if they had any meat? To which they answered, No. Cast then, replied he, the net on the right side of ship, and ye shall find. They followed his directions, and caught a prodigious number of large fish. Astonished at such remarkable success, the disciples looked upon one another for some time, till St. John told Peter that the person on the shore was, doubtless, their great Lord and Master, whom the winds, the sea, and the inhabitants of the watery region, were ready to obey.

Peter no sooner heard the beloved disciple declare his opinion concerning the stranger, than his zeal took fire; and notwithstanding the coldness of the season, he girt on his fisher's coat, threw himself into the sea, and swam to shore: his impatience to be with his dear Lord and Master not suffering him to stay the few minutes necessary to bring the ship to land.

As soon as the disciples came on shore, they found a fire kindled, and fish laid upon it, either immediately created by the power of their divine Master, or which came ashore of its own accord, and offered itself to his hand. But, notwithstanding there were fish already on the fire, he ordered them to bring of those they had now caught, and dress them for their repast, he himself eating with them; both to give them an instance of mutual love and friendship, and also to assure them of the truth of his human nature, since he was risen from the dead.

When the repast was ended, our blessed Saviour addressed himself particularly to Peter, urging him to the utmost diligence in the care of souls; and because he knew that nothing but a sincere love to himself could support him under the

troubles and dangers of so laborious and difficult an employment, he inquired of him whether he loved him more than the rest of the apostles? mildly reproving him for his over confident resolution. Peter, whom painful experience had taught humility, modestly answered, that none knew so well as himself the integrity of his affections. Thou knowest the hearts of all men, nothing is hid from thee, and therefore thou knowest that I love thee. The question was three several times repeated by our blessed Saviour, and as oftentimes answered by the apostle; it being but just, that he, who by a threefold denial had given so much reason to question his affection, should now by a threefold confession give more than common assurance of his sincere love to his Master: and to each of these confessions our great Redeemer added this signal trial of his affection, "Feed my sheep;" instruct and teach them with the utmost care, and the utmost tenderness.

The blessed Jesus having thus engaged Peter to a cheerful compliance with the dangers that might attend the discharge of his office, particularly intimated to him the sufferings that would attend him; telling him that when he was young he girt himself, lived at his pleasure, and went wherever his fancy directed him; but when he should reach the term of old age, he would stretch forth his hands, and another should gird and bind him, and lead him whither he had no desire to go; intimating as the evangelist tells us, "by what death he should glorify God."

Peter was well pleased to drink the bitter cup, and make his confession as public as his denial, provided all would be sufficient to prove the sincerity of his love. And seeing John following, he asked his great Master what should be his lot; and whether he who had been the object of his Master's love in his life-time, should not have as honourable a death as he that had denied him? To which Jesus replied, It doth not concern thee to know how I shall dispose of events with regard to him: he shall see the destruction of the Jewish nation, and then go down to the chambers of the dust in peace.

Not long after, our blessed Saviour appeared to his disciples at Jerusalem to take his last farewell of them who had attended him during his public ministry among the sons of men. He led them out as far as Bethany, a small village on the Mount of Olives, where he briefly told them that they were the persons he had chosen to be the witnesses both of his

death and resurrection; a testimony which they should publish in every part of the world. In order to which, he would, after his ascension into heaven, pour out his Spirit upon them in an extraordinary manner, that they might be the better enabled to struggle with that violent rage and fury with which the doctrine of the gospel would be opposed by men and devils. Adding, that in the meantime they should return to Jerusalem, and there wait till those miraculous powers were given them from on high.

Having finished this discoure, he laid his hands upon them, and gave them his solemn benediction; during which he was taken from them, and received up into the regions of the heavenly Canaan. The apostles, who beheld their Master visibly ascend into heaven, were filled with a greater sense of his glory than they had ever been while he conversed with them familiarly on earth. And having performed their solemn adoration to him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, there to wait for the accomplishment of their great Master's promise. How sudden a change was now wrought in the minds of the apostles! They who were lately overwhelmed with sorrow at the very mention of their Lord's departure from them, beheld him now with joy and triumph; they were fully satisfied of his glorious advancement to the right hand of Omnipotence, and of that peculiar care and providence which they were sure he would exercise over them, in pursuance of those great trusts he had committed to their care.

CHAPTER VI.

Transactions of Peter from the ascension of his blessed Master to the dispersion of the Church of Jerusalem.

THE apostles, though deprived of the personal presence of their dear Lord and Master, were indefatigable in fulfulling the commission they had received from him. The first object that engaged their attention, after their return to Jerusalem, was to fill up the vacancy in their number lately made by the unhappy fall and apostacy of Judas. In order to this, they called together the church, and entered into "an upper room;" when Peter, as the most forward in the assembly, proposed to them the choice of a new apostle.

He put them in mind that Judas, one of the disciples of their great and beloved Master, being influenced by his covetous and insatiable temper, had lately fallen from the honour of his place and ministry. That this was no more than what the prophet had long since foretold

should come to pass, and that the care of the church which had been committed to him should devolve upon another; and therefore it was highly necessary that some person who had been familiarly conversant with the blessed Jesus from first to last, and consequently a competent witness both of his doctrine and miracles, his death, resurrection, and ascension, should be substituted in his room.

This indeed was highly requisite; for as no witness is so valid and satisfactory as the testimony of an eye-witness, so the apostles all along principally insisted on this, that they delivered nothing more to the world concerning the great Redeemer of mankind than what they themselves had seen and heard. As his rising from the dead was a principle likely to meet with the greatest opposition, and which would be the most difficult tenet of the gospel to be believed by the sons of men, they urged this great truth incessantly, declaring that they were "eye-witnesses of his resurrection;" that they had seen and felt him, eaten and familiarly conversed with him, after his return from the chambers of the grave. It was, therefore, highly requisite that such an apostle should be chosen: and accordingly two candidates were proposed; Joseph called Barsabas, and Matthias, both qualified for the great and important office of the apostleship. And having prayed that the divine Providence would immediately guide and direct them in their choice, they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, who was accordingly admitted into the number of the apostles.

After filling up the vacancy in the apostolic number, they employed their time in prayer and meditation till the feast of Pentecost; when the promise of their great Master in sending the Holy Ghost was fulfilled. The Christian assembly were met as usual, to perform the public services of their worship, when suddenly a sound, like that of a mighty wind, rushed in upon them; representing the powerful efficacy of that divine Spirit which was now to be communicated to them. After which there appeared small flames of fire, which, in the shape of cloven tongues, descended and sat upon the head of each of them, to denote that their enjoyment of this gift should be constant and perpetual; and not like the prophets of old, who were inspired only at some particular times and seasons.

Upon this they were all immediately filled with the Holy Ghost, which, in an instant, enabled them to speak fluently several languages they had never learned, and probably never heard.

The report of so sudden and strange an action was soon spread through every part of Jerusalem, which at that time was full of Jewish proselytes, "devout men out of every nation under heaven; Parthians, Medes, Elamites, the dwellers in Mesopotamia and Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, the parts of Libya and Cyrene," from Rome, from Crete, and from Arabia. These no sooner heard of this miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit, than they flocked in prodigious numbers to the Christian assembly, where they were amazed to hear these Galileans speaking to them in their own native languages, so various and so very different from one another. And it could not fail of exceedingly increasing the wonder, to reflect on the meanness of the speakers, who were neither assisted by genius, polished by education, nor improved by use and custom. The disciples were destitute of all these assistances; their parts were mean, their education trifling, and their experience in speaking before great assemblies, nothing. Yet now these persons spoke boldly, and with the greatest propriety, in various languages. Nor were their discourses filled with idle stories, or the follies of a luxuriant fancy. No; they expatiated on the great and admirable works of Omnipotence, and the mysteries of the gospel, which human apprehension could never discover.

This surprising transaction had different effects on the minds of the people; some attributing it to the effect of a miracle, and others to the power and strength of new wine. Upon which the apostles all stood up, and Peter, in the name of the rest, undertook to confute this injurious calumny.

He told them that this scandalous slander proceeded from the spirit of malice and falsehood; that their censure was as uncharitable as it was unjust; that it was early in the morning, and therefore not a time for drinking, especially on a day set apart for devotion; that these extraordinary and miraculous effects were but the accomplishment of an ancient prophecy, which the Almighty had expressly declared should be fulfilled in the times of the Messiah; that Jesus of Nazareth had evidently proved himself to be that great prophet, the Son of the Most High, by many unquestionable miracles, of which they themselves had been eye-witnesses; and though, by the permission of Omnipotence, who was pleased by this means to bring about the redemption of mankind, they had wickedly crucified and slain him, yet God had raised him

from the dead; nor was it consistent with the justice and goodness of the Almighty, especially those divine predictions made concerning him, that he should be confined in the chambers of the grave; David, having particularly foretold that "his flesh should rest in hope;" that "God would not leave his soul in hell, neither suffer his Holy One to see corruption;" but "would make known to him the way of life." That this prophecy could not relate to David himself, as he had, many ages since, been reduced to dust, and his flesh passed through the different stages of corruption, his tomb being yet visible among them, and from whence he was known never to return; and therefore the prophecy must relate to Christ, having never been fulfilled in any but him, who both died and was risen again, whereof they were his witnesses. Nay, that he was not only risen from the dead, but ascended into the highest heaven, and, according to David's prediction, "sat down on the right-hand of God, until he had made his enemies his foot-stool;" which could not be primarily meant of David, as he never ascended bodily into heaven; that therefore the whole house of Israel ought to believe that this very Jesus whom they had crucified was that person whom God had appointed to be the Messiah, the founder of the Christian church, and the Saviour of the world.

This discourse, though the first that St. Peter ever made in public, deeply affected the people, and every word, like a dagger, pierced them to the heart, so that they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" To which Peter answered, the only way to obtain pardon for the many sins you have committed, and acquire the gift of the holy Ghost, is to repent sincerely, and be baptized in the name of this crucified Saviour. Upon these terms the promises of the new covenant, ratified by the death of the Son of God, will belong to you and your children, and to all that sincerely believe and embrace the gospel. He also used the most forcible and endearing expressions, to prevail on them to listen to the inviting calls of the Son of God, and by that means to save themselves from that unavoidable ruin and destruction, which would shortly fall on the heads of the wicked and headstrong generation of unbelieving Jews.

The effect of this discourse was equally wonderful and surprising; for great numbers of those who before ridiculed the religion of Jesus now acknowleded him for their Saviour, and flew to him for refuge from the impending storm:

and St. Luke tells us, that there were that day added to the church no less than three thousand souls, who were all baptized, and received into the flock of the great Shepherd of Israel, the bishop of our souls. A quick and plentiful harvest indeed! "This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

Soon after this wonderful effusion of the Holy Spirit, Peter and John, going up to the temple about three in the afternoon, near the conclusion of one of the solemn hours of prayer, saw a poor impotent cripple, about forty years of age, who had been lame from his birth, lying at the "Beautiful gate of the temple," and asking alms of those who entered the sacred edifice. This miserable object moved their compassion; and Peter beholding him with attention, said, The riches of this world, the silver and gold so highly coveted by the sons of men, are not in my power to bestow; but the Lord hath given me the power of restoring life and health, and I am ready to assist thee.

Then taking the man by the hand, he commanded him, in the name of "Jesus of Nazareth, to rise up and walk." Immediately the nerves and sinews were strengthened, and the several parts of the diseased members performed their natural functions. Upon which the man acompanied them into the temple, walking, leaping, and praising God.

So strange and extraordinary a cure filled the minds of the people with admiration, and their curiosity drew them around the apostle, to view the man who had performed it. Peter seeing the multitude gathering round them, took the opportunity of speaking to them in the following manner: "Men and brethren, this remarkable cure should not excite your admiration of us, as if we had performed it by our own power. It was wrought in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, our crucified Master, by the power of that very Christ, that holy and just person, whom you yourselves denied, and delivered to Pilate, nay, and preferred a murderer before him, when the governor was desirous of letting him go. But though ye have put him to death, yet we are witnesses that he is risen again from the dead, and that he is ascended into heaven, where he will remain till the great and tremendous day of general restitution. This, I know, was done by you and your rulers through ignorance, not being thoroughly convinced of the greatness and divinity of his person; an ignorance by which the great and righteous designs of Omnipotence were brought about, and the pro-

phecies concerning the person and sufferings of the Messiah, delivered by Moses, Samuel, and all the prophets "since the world began," have been accomplished. But now it is high time to repent and turn to God, that your crying sins may be forgiven; that when the Messiah shall appear, to execute judgment upon the Jewish nation, it may be a time of comfort to you, as it will be of vengeance and destruction to others. You should remember, that you are the peculiar persons to whom the blessings and the promises primarily belonged, and to whom the Almighty first sent his only Son, that he might shower on you his blessings, by "turning you away from your iniquities."

While Peter was speaking to the people in one part of the temple, John was in all probability doing the same in the other; and the success plainly indicated how powerful the preaching of the apostles was; five thousand persons embracing the doctrines of the gospel, and acknowledging the crucified Jesus for their Lord and Saviour.

Such amazing success could not fail of exciting the attention and envy of the rulers of Israel. Accordingly, the priests and Sadducees repaired to the Roman magistrate, and intimated to him, that, in all probability, this concourse of people would prove the cause of a tumult and insurrection. Upon this information, the captain of the temple seized on the apostles, and cast them into prison.

The next day, they were carried before the Jewish Sanhedrim; and being asked by what power and authority they had done this, Peter boldly answered, "Be it known unto you, and to all the descendants of Jacob, this miracle was wrought wholly in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye yourselves have crucified and slain, and whom the Almighty hath raised again from the dead. This is the stone which you builders refused, and which is become the head of the corner. Nor is there any other way by which you, or any of the sons of men, can be saved, but by this crucified Saviour."

The boldness of the apostle was admired by all, even by the court of the Sanhedrim. And it should be remembered, that these very judges were the persons who had so lately condemned the blessed Jesus himself, and had no other way of colouring their proceedings, than by a second act of cruelty; that the apostles did not charge them with the crime of crucifying the Son of God in secret, but in the open court of judicature, and in the hearing of all the people.

The court, after beholding them

with a kind of astonishment, remembered that they had seen them with Jesus of Nazareth, and therefore ordered them to withdraw, while they debated among themselves what was proper to be done. It was impossible to deny the miracle; for it was performed before all the people, and the person on whom it was wrought was no stranger in Jerusalem. They therefore resolved to charge them strictly not to preach any more in the name of Jesus. Accordingly, they were again called in, and acquainted with this resolution of the council. To which the apostles answered, That as they had received a commission from heaven to declare to all nations what they had seen and heard, it was certainly their duty "to obey God rather than man."

This was a fair appeal to the consciences of their very judges; but these rulers of Israel, instead of being satisfied with it, would, in all probability, have proceeded to greater violence, had not the people's veneration for the apostles checked their malice: so that all they dared to do was to enforce their menaces, and dismiss them.

When the apostles were returned to their brethren, they informed them of the treatment they had met with from the Jewish magistrates. Upon which they all joined in prayer to the Almighty, for an extraordinary supply of courage, and assistance to enable them to execute their commission in these perilous times, and plant the religion of their crucified Saviour. Nor were their prayers offered in vain; for before they had concluded their fervent addresses to the throne of grace, the house was again shaken as on the day of Pentecost; and they were instantly replenished with fresh measures of the Holy Ghost; and, notwithstanding all the threatenings of the Jewish rulers, found themselves enabled to preach the gospel of their great and beloved Master with more boldness than ever.

The labours of the apostles were crowned with abundant success, and it seems that such was the aversion of the inveterate Jews to those who became converts to the faith of Christ, that they were deprived of business in their respective callings; for we find that the professors of the religion of the holy Jesus sold their effects, and brought the money to the apostles, that they might deposit it in one common treasury, and thence supply the several exigencies of the church.

But hypocrisy was not unknown among the professors of religion, even in those primitive times. Ananias and his wife Sapphira, having embraced the doctrines of the gos-

pel, pretended to follow the free and generous spirit of others, by consecrating and devoting their estate to the honour of God, and the necessities of the church. Accordingly they sold their possessions, and brought part of the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet; hoping to deceive them, though guided by the Spirit of Omnipotence. But Peter, at his first coming in, asked Ananias how he could suffer Satan to fill his heart with such enormous wickedness as to think to "deceive the Holy Ghost?" That before it was sold, it was wholly in his own power, and afterwards the money entirely at his own disposal; so that this action was capable of no other interpretation than that he had not only abused and injured man, but mocked the Almighty himself, who, he must know, was privy to his most secret thoughts.

The apostle had no sooner finished, than Ananias, to the great surprise of all that were present, fell down dead, by a stroke from heaven.

Not long after, his wife came in, whom Peter reproved in the same manner he had done her husband, adding, that she should immediately end her life in the same awful manner: upon which she was smitten by the hand of Omnipotence, and fell down dead; sharing with her husband in the punishment, as she had before in the heinous crime. This remarkable instance of severity filled all the converts with fear and trembling, and prevented in a great measure that hypocrisy and dissimulation by which others might flatter themselves to deceive the church.

But such instances of severity were very extraordinary; the power of the apostles was generally exerted in works of mercy and beneficence towards the sons and daughters of affliction. They cured all kinds of diseases, and cast out devils; so that they brought the sick into the streets, and laid them upon beds and couches, that the shadow at least of Peter, as he passed by, might cover some of them; well knowing a single touch or word from either of the apostles was sufficient to remove the most inveterate diseases.

Such astonishing miracles could not fail of contributing to the propagation of the gospel, and to convince the world that the apostles were far more considerable persons than they at first took them to be; and that poverty and meanness may be blended with true worth and genuine greatness. How small and insignificant is the power and dignity of all earthly monarchs, when compared to the glory of this apostle! and how contemptible were the triumphs of a Pompey and a Cæsa

when placed in competition with the greatness and majesty of St. Peter, who converted the world from idolatry and the worship of devils, and withdrew the veil of ignorance from the understandings of the human race; not by the power of armies, nor the insinuating artifices of pomp and grandeur, but by faith in the power of his Saviour.

But the stupendous works of the apostles, and the growing numbers of the church, alarmed the rulers of Israel; who seized the apostles, and cast them into prison. Their power, however, was limited, like the drop of a bucket to the ocean, when opposed to the almighty arm of the great Jehovah. The prison doors, though fastened with the utmost caution, opened of themselves at the approach of a messenger from the courts of heaven: who commanded the apostles to leave the dungeon, repair to the temple, and preach the glad tidings of the gospel to the people.

The officers, returning in the morning, found the prison doors shut and guarded, but the prisoners were gone. This remarkable circumstance greatly alarmed them, and they repaired to the council to acquaint them with what had happened. The rulers were astonished at the news; but hearing that the apostles were preaching in the temple, they sent an officer to bring them, without the least violence to their persons, before the Sanhedrim. Their order was soon obeyed, and the disciples of Jesus placed before the same court that had so lately condemned their Master.

The apostles being thus brought before the Sanhedrim, the high-priest asked them how they dared to propagate a doctrine they had so strictly charged them not to preach? To which Peter, in the name of the rest, replied, "We ought to obey God rather than man. And though you have so barbarously and contumeliously treated the Saviour of the world, yet God hath raised him up to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give both repentance and remission of sins. And of these things we are witnesses, and so is also the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to all them that obey him."

This answer, delivered with remarkable boldness, exasperated the council, and they began to consult how they might destroy them. But Gamaliel, a grave and learned counsellor, after commanding the apostles to withdraw, desired them to proceed with caution in an affair of this nature: reminding them, that several persons had already raised parties, and drawn great numbers of partizans after them; but that every

one of them had miscarried, and all their designs were rendered abortive, without the interposition of that court: that they would, therefore, do well to let the apostles alone; for if their doctrines and designs were of human invention, they would come to nothing; but if they were of God, all their power and policy would be of no effect, and experience would too soon convince them that they had themselves opposed the counsels of the Most High.

This prudent and rational advice had the desired success; the council were satisfied; and after commanding the apostles to be scourged, they strictly charged them to preach no more in the name of Jesus, and set them at liberty.

But this charge had little effect on the disciples of the blessed Jesus; they returned home in triumph, rejoicing that they were thought worthy to suffer in so righteous a cause, and to undergo shame and reproach for so kind and so powerful a Master. Nor could all the opposition of men, blended with the malice of the powers of darkness, discourage them from performing their duty to the Almighty, or lessen their zeal for preaching, both in public and private, the doctrines of the gospel.

CHAPTER VII.

Concluding scenes of St. Peter's Life.

THE Christian doctrine had been propagated so far without much violence or opposition, in Jerusalem, but now a storm commenced with the death of the proto-martyr Stephen, nor did it end but with the dispersion of the disciples; by which means the glad tidings of the gospel, which had till now been confined to Judea, were preached to the Gentile world, and an ancient prophecy fulfilled, which says, "Out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Thus does the Almighty bring good out of evil, and cause the malicious intentions of the wicked to redound to his praise.

Among the dispersed followers of the blessed Jesus, Philip the deacon retired to Samaria, where he preached the gospel, and confirmed his doctrine by many miraculous cures, and casting out devils. In this city was one Simon, who, by magic art and diabolical sorceries, was beheld with admiration by the people; and some considered him as "the great power of God," a name he blasphemously gave himself, pretending to be the first and chief Deity, or what every nation considered as the supreme God.

This wicked mortal, hearing the sermons of Philip, and beholding the miracles wrought by him, became a professed convert to the religion of Jesus, and was baptized with the others who had embraced the principles of the Christian doctrine.

The apostles who continued at Jerusalem were soon informed of this remarkable success of Philip's ministry in Samaria, and thought it necessary to send him assistance. Accordingly Peter and John were deputed to this infant church; who having prayed, and laid their hands on the new converts, they received the Holy Ghost.

Such miraculous gifts astonished the magician; and, desirous of obtaining the same privilege, he offered the disciples money to invest him with this power, that on whomsoever he laid his hand they might receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter, who perceived the insincerity of his heart, rejected his offer with scorn and detestation. "Thy money," said the great apostle, "perish with thee!" And as thy heart is full of hypocrisy and deceit, thou canst have no share nor portion in so great a privilege. Thou wouldst do well to repent of so monstrous a crime, and sincerely apply thyself to seek the Almighty, that the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee; for I perceive that thy temper and disposition of mind is still vicious and corrupt, that thou art yet bound by the chains of iniquity, and in a state displeasing to the Almighty and dangerous to thyself.

Simon was terrified at this speech of St. Peter; his conscience flew in his face, and he prayed the apostles to make intercession for him to the throne of grace, that the Almighty might pardon his sin, and not inflict on him those heavy judgments.

The apostles did not stay any longer in Samaria than was necessary to confirm the new converts in the faith they had embraced, and to preach the glad tidings of salvation in the adjacent villages: after which they returned to Jerusalem, to assist the rest of the disciples with their power.

The storm, though violent, being at length blown over, the church enjoyed a time of calmness and security; during which St. Peter went to visit the churches lately planted in those parts by the disciples whom the persecution had dispersed. And at his arrival at Lydda, he miraculously healed Æneas, who had been afflicted with the palsy, and confined to his bed eight years; but on Peter's bidding him arise, in the name of Jesus, he was immediately restored to perfect health. Nor was the success of this miracle

confined to Æneas and his family; the fame of it was blazed through all the neighbouring country, and many believed in the doctrine of the Son of God. It was even known at Joppa, a sea-port town about six miles from Lydda; and the brethren immediately sent for Peter, on the following melancholy occasion. Tabitha, whose Greek name was Dorcas, a woman venerable for her piety and extensive charity, was lately dead, to the great loss of mankind, who loved genuine benevolence, especially the poor and afflicted, who were supported by her charity.

At Peter's arrival he found her dressed for funeral solemnity, and surrounded by mournful widows, who showed the coats and garments wherewith she had clothed them, the monuments of her liberality. But Peter put them all out, and kneeling down prayed with the utmost fervency; then turning to the body, he commanded her to arise; and taking her by the hand, presented her in perfect health to her friends and others, who were assembled to pay their last duties to so good a woman. This miracle confirmed those who had newly embraced the doctrine of Jesus, and converted many more to the faith. After which he staid a considerable time at Joppa, lodging in the house of one Simon a tanner.

During his abode in this city, one day, when he was offering up his prayers to the Almighty, he found himself hungry, and called for meat; but while it was dressing for him, he fell into a trance, in which was presented to him a large sheet let down from heaven, containing all sorts of creatures, clean and unclean; and at the same time a voice said to him, "Arise, Peter, kill and eat." But the apostle, as yet tenacious of the rites and institutions of the Mosaic law, answered that his conscience refused to comply, having never eaten anything that was common or unclean. To which the voice replied, that it was unjust to consider that as common which God had cleansed. This was done thrice; after which the vessel was again drawn up into heaven, and the vision disappeared. By this symbolical representation, St. Peter was given to understand that the Almighty was now going to send him on a new embassy, which the Spirit at the same time commanded him to undertake. While he was still wondering with himself what the event would prove, three messengers knocked at the gate, inquiring for him; and from them he received the following account: That Cornelius, a Roman captain

of a band of Italian soldiers at Cesarea, a person of great benevolence, and one who had been long a proselyte, had, by an immediate command from God, sent for him.

The next day, Peter, accompanied with some of the brethren, went with the messengers, and the day after arrived at Cesarea. Cornelius having information of his coming, summoned his friends and kindred to Cesarea; and, at the apostle's entering the house, fell at his feet, a method of address frequent in eastern countries. But Peter, who considered that honour as due only to the Almighty, lifted him up, and declared to the company the reason of his coming, saying he had lately learned that there was no respect of persons with God.

When the apostle had ended his speech, Cornelius at his request related the particular reason for his sending for him. Four days ago, said this Roman officer, being conversant in the duties of fasting and praying, an angel from the court of heaven appeared to me, declaring that my prayers and alms were come up as a memorial before the throne of the Most High; and at the same time ordered me to send to Joppa for one Simon Peter, who lodged in the house of a tanner near the sea-side, who would give me farther information in the mysteries of salvation. Accordingly, I made no hesitation to obey the heavenly messenger; I sent immediately for thee; and now thou art come, and we are met together to hear what instructions thou hast to communicate.

The relation of the Roman centurion astonished the apostle; but he was soon convinced that God had broken down the partition wall, and no longer maintained a peculiar kindness for the sons of Jacob; that it was not the nation, but the religion, not the external quality of the man, but the internal temper of the mind, that recommended the human race to the favour of Omnipotence; that the devout and pious, the righteous and the good men, whatever part of the earth they may inhabit, are the favourites of heaven; that God as highly respects a just and virtuous man in the barren wastes of Scythia, as on the mountain of Sion; that the reconciling and making peace between God and man by Jesus Christ, was the doctrine published by the prophets of old; and that God had now anointed and consecrated Jesus of Nazareth with divine powers, in the exercise whereof he went about doing good to the children of men; that they had seen all he had done among the Jews, whom though they had slain and crucified, yet that God had

raised him again the third day, and had openly showed him to his apostles and followers, whom he had chosen to be his peculiar witnesses, and whom he had accordingly permitted to eat and drink with him after his resurrection, commanding them to preach the gospel to all mankind, and to testify that he was the person whom God had ordained to be the great Judge of the world; and that all the prophets with one consent bore witness of him; and that this Jesus is he in whose name whosoever believes would certainly receive remission of sins.

While Peter was thus preaching to them, the Holy Ghost fell upon the greatest part of his hearers, enabling them to speak several languages, and in them to magnify the great Creator of the sons of men. At this the Jews who accompanied Peter marvelled exceedingly, to see that the gifts of the Holy Ghost were poured upon the Gentiles; and Peter seeing this told the company that he knew no reason why these persons should not be baptized, as they had received the Holy Ghost as well as the Jews: and accordingly he gave orders that they should be baptized; and to confirm them in the holy faith they had embraced, he staid with them some time.

This action of St Peter was considered in various lights by the brethren at Jerusalem, who, being but lately converted to the Christian faith, were much attached to the religious ceremonies of the Mosaic institution, and therefore most of them severely charged Peter at his return, as being too familiar with the Gentiles. How powerful is the prejudice of education!

The Jews had for many ages conceived an inveterate opposition against the Gentiles, considering them as persons hated by the Almighty, who had chosen them for his peculiar people. The law of Moses, indeed, enjoined them to be kind to their own nation in preference to all others; and the rights and institutions of their religion, and the peculiar form of their government, rendered them very different from the inhabitants of other countries: a separation which, in after ages, they contracted into a much narrower compass. They were also tenaciously proud of their external privileges in being the descendants of their progenitor Abraham, and, therefore, looked upon the rest of the world as reprobates; proudly refusing to hold any conversation with them, or even to show them the common kindness of humanity.

It is, therefore, no wonder that they were highly displeased with St. Peter; nor would he have been able to have defended his conduct in

a satisfactory manner, had he not been charged with a peculiar commission from the Almighty for extending the privileges of the gospel to the Gentile world. But he had no sooner informed them that the grace of the gospel was not confined to any particular nation or people, nor to ranks or degrees among men, than they immediately changed their displeasure against him into thanks to the beneficent Father of the human race, who had "granted to the Gentiles also repentance unto life."

Peter, after having finished his visitation to the newly planted churches returned to Jerusalem, and was indefatigable in instructing the converts to the religion of Jesus, and preaching the glad tidings of salvation to the descendants of Jacob. But he did not long continue in this pleasing course: Herod Agrippa, in order to ingratiate himself into the favour of the Jews, put the apostle James to death; and finding the action was highly acceptable to that stiff-necked people, he resolved to extend his cruelty to Peter, and accordingly cast him into prison. But the churches were incessant in their prayers to God for his safety: and what have mortals to fear, when guarded by the hand of Omnipotence? Herod was persuaded he should soon accomplish his intention, and sacrifice Peter to the insatiable cruelty of the Jews.

But the night before his intended execution, a messenger from the court of heaven visited the gloomy horrors of the dungeon, where he found Peter asleep between his keepers. The angel raised him up, took off his chains, and ordered him to gird on his garments and follow him. Peter obeyed, and having passed through the first and second watch, they came to the iron gate leading to the city, which opened to them of its own accord. The angel also accompanied him through one of the streets, and then departed from him; on which Peter came to himself, and perceived that it was no vision; but that his great and beloved Master had really sent a messenger from above, and released him from prison. He, therefore, repaired to the house of Mary, where many pious persons were assembled, and offering up their prayers to the throne of grace for his safety. On his knocking at the door, a maid who came to let him in, knowing his voice, ran back to tell them that Peter was at the door; which they at first considered as the effect of fancy; but the damsel continuing to affirm that it was really true, they concluded it was his angel, or some messenger sent from the court of heaven. But on

opening the door, they were convinced of their mistake, finding that it was really Peter himself, who briefly told them how he was delivered; and desiring them to inform his brethren of his being set at liberty, retired to another place.

In the morning the officers came from Herod to the prison, with orders to bring Peter out to the people, who were gathered together to behold his execution. But when they came to the prison, the keepers informed them that the apostle had made his escape; which so exasperated Herod, that he commanded those who were entrusted with the care of the prisoner, to be put to death.

Some time after this miraculous deliverance of St. Peter, a controversy arose between the Jewish and Gentile converts, with regard to the observation of the Mosaic law; a dispute which gave great uneasiness to many persons; the Jews zealously contending that it was absolutely necessary to salvation to be circumcised, and observe the precepts of the ceremonial law, as well as those of the gospel. To compose this difference, it was thought necessary to summon a general council of the apostles and brethren to meet at Jerusalem. This was accordingly done, and the case thoroughly debated. At last Peter stood up, and declared that God having chosen him, out of all the apostles, to be the first preacher of the gospel among the Gentiles, God, who was best able to judge of the hearts of men, had borne witness to them, that they were accepted of him, by giving them his Holy Spirit as well as he had done the Jews; and, consequently, that there was no difference between them. They could not, therefore, place the Jewish yoke, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear, upon the necks of the disciples, without tempting and provoking the Almighty, who had given sufficient reasons to believe that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, would be saved by the grace of the gospel.

This declaration of St. Peter convinced the church, and it was unanimously decreed that no other burden than the strict observance of a few particular precepts, equally convenient to the Jew and Gentile, should be imposed on them. And the decision was drawn up in a synodical epistle, and sent to the several churches, for allaying the heats and controversies this dispute had occasioned.

Soon after this council, Peter left Jerusalem, and went down to Antioch; where, using the liberty given him by the gospel, he freely ate and conversed with the Gentile proselytes, considering them now as

"fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." This he had been taught by the vision of the sheet let down from heaven; this had been lately decreed at Jerusalem; this he had before practised with regard to Cornelius and his family, and justified the action to the satisfaction of his accusers; and this he had freely and innocently done at Antioch, till some of the Jewish brethren coming thither, he, for fear of offending them, withdrew himself from the Gentiles, as if it had been unlawful to hold conversation with uncircumcised persons; notwithstanding he knew, and was fully satisfied, that our blessed Saviour had broken down the wall of partition between the Jew and Gentile.

By thus acting against the light of his own mind and judgment, he condemned what he had approved, and destroyed the superstructure he had before erected: at the same time he confirmed the Jewish zealots in their inveterate errors, filled the minds of the Gentiles with scruples, and their consciences with fears. Nor was this all; the old prejudices between the Jew and Gentile were revived, and the whole number of Jewish converts, following the apostle's example, separated themselves from the company of the Gentile Christians. Nay, even Barnabas himself was carried away by this torrent of unwarrantable practice.

St. Paul was now at Antioch, and resolutely opposed St. Peter to his face; he publicly reproved him as a person worthy to be blamed for his prevarication. He reasoned and severely expostulated with him; that he who was himself a Jew, and consequently under a more immediate obligation of observing the Mosaic law, should throw off the yoke himself, and at the same time endeavour to impose it on the Gentiles, who were never under the necessity of observing the ceremonies of the Israelites; a severe, though an impartial charge. But the remarkable eagerness of St. Paul to place things on a proper foundation, though he succeeded for the present, made a great noise afterwards in the world, and gave occasion to the enemies of Christianity to represent the whole as a compact of forgery and deceit; of such pernicious consequences are disputes among the principals of the church; and so fatal are the effects of pusillanimity, and a fear of offending persons bigoted to insignificant ceremonies.

As we have now related all the transactions of this apostle founded on Scripture authority, we shall have recourse to ancient historians for the residue of his life.

Some time before this contest at Antioch, St. Peter preached the gospel in various parts of the world, enlarging the kingdom of his great Master, and spreading the glad tidings of salvation among the inhabitants of various countries; and, among the rest, those of Rome, then the mistress of the world. In that capital he is said to have continued several years, till the emperor Claudius, taking advantage of some seditious tumults raised by the Jews, published an edict, whereby they were banished from Rome, and, among the rest, St. Peter, who returned to Jerusalem, and was present at the synod already mentioned. But how long he continued in the capital of Judea is uncertain; for we have no account of his transactions for many years. This, however, is certain, that he was not idle in the service of his great Master; and Eusebius tells us, from Metaphrastus, that he visited many of the western parts, where he continued several years, spreading the glad tidings of salvation in these remote places, and converting the various nations to the Christian faith.

But however this be, whether St. Peter was or was not in these parts, it is certain that towards the latter end of Nero's reign he returned to Rome, where he found the minds of the people strangely bewildered, and hardened against the doctrines of the gospel, by the sorceries of Simon Magus, who, as has been already observed, was chastised by Peter for his wickedness at Samaria. This monster of impiety not only opposed the preaching of the apostles, but also did all in his power to render them and their doctrine odious to the emperor. St. Peter, foreseeing that the calumnies of Simon and his adherents would hasten his death, took the greater pains, and was still more assiduous to confirm those he had been any way instrumental in converting to the sublime truths they had received. And in order to this, he strongly opposed that great deceiver of mankind; for in the last years of his life he seems to have wrote his two epistles to the dispersed Jews in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bythinia; and in an appointed encounter with Simon, discovered his magical impostures, and, through the power and assistance of the Almighty, brought him to an exemplary and miserable death.

The circumstances which attended this remarkable event are related as follow: The apostle meeting with Simon at Rome, and finding him still pretending to be some great person, even the promised Messiah, he could not help opposing zealously his presumptuous arrogance. But

Simon, more incensed by the opposition, offered to give the people such an evident demonstration of his being what he pretended, that he would place the whole beyond contradiction, by immediately ascending up to heaven. Upon this, by the help of some unperceived device, he raised himself from the earth, and seemed to be moving towards the regions of heaven. St. Peter and St. Paul, beholding the delusion, had recourse to prayer, and obtained their petitions of the Almighty, namely, that the impostor should be soon discovered, for the honour of the blessed Jesus. Accordingly he fell headlong to the ground; by which he was so bruised, that he died in a very short time.

Such was the end of this miserable, this unhappy man; but the news of it no sooner reached the emperor's ears, than he vowed revenge, both for the death of his favourite, and the endeavours used by the apostle to "turn mankind from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Accordingly he issued orders for apprehending St. Peter, together with his companion St. Paul. St. Ambrose tells us, that when the people perceived the danger to which St. Peter was now exposed, they prayed him to quit Rome, and repair for a while to some secure retreat, that his life might be preserved for the benefit of the church. Peter with great reluctance, yielded to their entreaties, and made his escape by night; but as he passed the gate, he was met by a person in the form of his great and beloved Master; and on his asking him whither he was going, answered, "To Rome to be crucified a second time:" which Peter taking for a reproof of his cowardice, returned again into the city, and was soon after apprehended, and cast, together with St. Paul, into the Mamertine prison. Here they were confined eight or nine months; but spent their time in the exercises of religion, especially in preaching to the prisoners, and those who resorted to them. And during this confinement, it is generally thought, St. Peter wrote the second epistle to the dispersed Jews, wherein he endeavours to confirm them in the belief and practice of Christianity, and to fortify them against those poisonous and pernicious principles and actions which even then began to break in upon the Christian church.

Nero at last returning from Achaia, entered Rome in triumph; and soon after his arrival resolved that the apostles should fall as victims and sacrifices to his cruelties and revenge. While the fatal stroke was expected, the Christians in

Rome were continually offering up their prayers to Heaven to protect those two holy persons. But the Almighty was now willing to put an end to their sorrows, and, after sealing the truth they had preached with their own blood, to receive them into the regions of eternal bliss and happiness, and exchange the crown of martyrdom for the crown of glory. Accordingly, they were both condemned by the cruel emperor of Rome: and St. Peter having taken his farewell of his brethren, especially of St. Paul, was taken from the prison, and led to the top of the Vatican mount, near the Tiber, where he was sentenced to surrender up his life on the cross.

At his coming to the place of execution, he begged the favour of the officers that he might not be crucified in the common manner, but with his head downward; affirming that he was unworthy to suffer in the same posture in which his Lord had suffered before him. This request was accordingly complied with: and the great apostle St. Peter surrendered up his soul into the hands of his great and beneficent Master, who came down from heaven to ransom mankind from destruction, and open for them the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem.

His body being taken down from the cross, is said to have been embalmed by Marcellinus, the presbyter, after the manner of the Jews, and then buried in the Vatican, near the Appian Way, two miles from Rome.

Here it remained till the time of pope Cornelius, who reconveyed it to Rome, where it rested in an obscure place, till the reign of Constantine, who, for the great reverence he entertained for the Christian religion, erected many churches at Rome, and rebuilt and greatly enlarged the Vatican in honour of St. Peter. He also considerably enriched the church with gifts and ornaments; and it has continued increasing in riches and splendour every age, until it has become one of the wonders of the world.

If we consider St. Peter as a man, there seems to have been a natural eagerness predominant in his temper, which animated his soul to the most bold and sometimes rash, undertakings. It was this, in a great measure, that prompted him to be so forward to speak, and to return answers sometimes before he had well considered them. It was this that made him expose his person to the most imminent dangers, promise those great things in behalf of his Master, resolutely draw his sword in his quarrel against a whole band of soldiers, and wound a servant of the high-priest. nay he had

in all probability attempted greater things, had not the Lord restrained his impetuosity, and given a seasonable check to his disposition.

If we consider him as a disciple of the blessed Jesus, we shall find him exemplary in the great duties of religion. His humility and lowliness of mind were remarkable. With what a passionate earnestness, on the conviction of a miracle, did he beg our blessed Saviour to depart from him, thinking it unworthy the Son of God to come near so vile a sinner!

When the great Redeemer of mankind, by that amazing condescension, stooped so low as to wash the feet of his disciples, Peter could not be persuaded to permit his performing it, thinking it highly improper that so great a person should submit to such a servile office towards a person so mean as himself; nor could he be induced to admit of it, till his great Master threatened to deprive him of his favour.

When Cornelius, the Roman centurion, heightened in his opinion of him by an immediate command from the Almighty concerning him, would have treated him with more than ordinary marks of esteem and veneration, he was so far from complying with it, that he declared he was nothing more than a mortal like himself. His love and zeal for his Master were remarkable; he thought he could never express either at too high a rate; venturing on the greatest perils, and exposing his life to the most imminent dangers. His forwardness to own his great Master for the Messiah and Son of the Most High, was remarkably great; and it was this that drew from his Lord that honourable encomium, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona." But his courage and constancy in confessing Christ, even before his most inveterate enemies, was still greater, after he had recovered himself from his fall. How plainly does he tell the Jews, that they were the murderers and crucifiers of the Lord of glory! Nay, with what an undaunted courage, with what a heroic greatness of soul, did he tell the very Sanhedrim who had sentenced and condemned him, that they were guilty of his death, and that they had no other way of escaping the vengeance of the Almighty, but by the merits of that very Jesus whom they had crucified and put to death!

Lastly, if we consider him as an apostle, as a pastor, or a shepherd of the souls of men, we shall find him faithful and diligent in his office, zealously endeavouring to instruct the ignorant, reduce the erroneous, strengthen the weak, confirm the strong, reclaim the

vicious, and turn the children of men into the paths of righteousness. He never omitted any opportunity of preaching to the people, and spreading the glad tidings of the gospel among the human race; and so powerful were his discourses, that he converted multitudes at one time. How many painful journeys and dangerous voyages did he undertake! With what unconquerable patience did he endure the greatest trials, surmount every difficulty, and remove every opposition, that he might plant the gospel of his beloved Master; never refusing even to lay down his life to promote it! Nor was he only assiduous to perform these duties himself, but he was also careful to animate others to do the like; earnestly pressing and persuading the pastors and governors of the church "to feed the flock of God," to labour freely for the good of the souls of men, and not undertake those offices to acquire advantage to themselves; beseeching them to treat the flock committed to their care with lenity and gentleness, and to be themselves shining examples of piety and religion, the surest method of rendering their ministry successful. And because it was impossible for him to be always present to teach and warn the children of men, he endeavoured by letters to imprint on their minds the practice of what they had been taught. A method, he tells us, he was resolved to pursue as long as he continued an inhabitant of this world: "thinking it meet, while he was in this tabernacle, to stir up, by putting them in mind of these things;" that so "they might be able, after his decease, to have them always in remembrance."

Thus lived, thus died, Simon Peter, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, and at length to offer up his life in ratification of the doctrine he delivered, and the faith he maintained and propagated.

SAINT PAUL.

CHAPTER I.

Account of this Apostle, from his Birth till his Conversion to the Christian Faith.

THIS great apostle of the Gentiles was a native of Tarsus, and a descendant from the ancient stock of Abraham. He was born about two years before the blessed Jesus, and belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, the youngest Son of Jacob, who thus prophesied of him: "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil:" a prophetical character, which Tertullian and others will have to be accomplished in our apostle. For in his youth, or "morning of his days," he persecuted the churches, destroying the flock of the Almighty; "he devoured his prey." In his declining age, or "evening of his days," he became a physician of the nations, feeding and establishing, with the greatest care and assiduity, the sheep of Christ, that great shepherd of Israel; he "divided the spoil." But this conjecture savours more of fancy than of good sense.

Tarsus, the place of this apostle's nativity, was the metropolis of Cilicia, and situated about three hundred miles distant from Jerusalem; it was exceedingly rich and populous, and a Roman municipium, or free corporation, invested with the privileges of Rome by the two first emperors, as a reward for the citizens' firm adherence to the Cæsars, in the rebellion of Crassus. St. Paul was therefore born a Roman citizen, and he often pleads this privilege on his trial.

It was common for the inhabitants of Tarsus to send their children into other cities for learning and improvement; especially to Jerusalem, where they were so numerous, that they had a synagogue of their own, called the synagogue of Cilicians. To this capital our apostle was also sent, and brought up at the school of that eminent rabbi, Gamaliel, in the most exact knowledge of the law of Moses. Nor did he fail to profit by the instructions of that great Master; for he so diligently conformed himself to its precepts, that, without boasting, he asserts of himself that, touching the righteousness of the law, he was

blameless, and defied even his enemies to allege anything to the contrary, even in his youth. He joined himself to the sect of the Pharisees, the most strict order of the Jewish religion, but, at the same time, the proudest, and the greatest enemies to Christ and his holy religion.

With regard to his double capacity of Jewish extraction and Roman freedom, he had two names, Saul and Paul; the former Hebrew, and the latter Latin. It was common for the descendants of Benjamin to give the name Saul to their children, ever since the time of the first king of Israel, who was chosen out of that tribe; and Paul was a name as common among the Romans. We must also consider his trade of tent-making as a part of his education; it being a constant practice of the Jews to bring up their children to some honest calling, that, in case of necessity, they might provide for themselves by the labour of their own hands.

Saul having obtained a thorough knowledge of the sciences cultivated by the Jews, and being naturally of a very hot and fiery temper, became a great champion of the law of Moses, and the tradition of the elders, which he considered as zeal for God. This rendered him impatient of all opposition to the doctrines and tenets he had imbibed, and a vehement persecutor of the Christians, who were commonly reputed the enemies and destroyers of the Jewish economy. We must not, however, consider our apostle as guilty of the pride and hypocrisy of the Pharisees; for he declares that he had ever been careful to act in conformity to the dictates of his conscience, by which he thought himself bound to do "many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." It was, therefore, the prejudices of his education, and the natural warmth of his temper, that excited him to those violent persecutions of the Christians for which he became so famous.

The first action we find him engaged in, was the disputation he and his countrymen had with the martyr Stephen, with regard to the Messiah. The Christian was too hard for them in the dispute, but they were too powerful for him in their civil interests; for being enraged at his convincing arguments, they carried him before the high-priest, who by false accusations condemned him to death. How far Saul was concerned in this cruel action is impossible to say; all we know is, that he "kept the raiment of them that slew him."

The storm of persecution against the church being thus begun, it increased prodigiously, and the poor



Conversion of Saul.

Christians of Jerusalem were miserably harrassed and dispersed. In this persecution our apostle was a principal agent, searching all the adjacent parts for the afflicted saints, beating some in the synagogue, inflicting other cruelties, confining some in prison, and procuring others to be put to death.

Nor could Jerusalem and the adjacent parts confine his fiery zeal: he applied to the Sanhedrim, and procured a commission from that court to extend his persecution to Damascus. How infernally insatiable is the fury of a misguided zeal! how restless and unwearied in its designs of cruelty! It had already sufficiently harrassed the poor Christians at Jerusalem; but not content with this, it persecuted them even to strange cities, even to Damascus itself, whither many of them had fled for shelter; resolving to bring them back to Jerusalem, in order to their punishment and execution.

It may not be improper here to observe, that the Jewish Sanhedrim had not only the power of seizing and scourging offenders against their law, within the bounds of their own country; but by the connivance and favour of the Romans, might send into other countries, where there were any synagogues that acknowledged a dependence in religious affairs upon the council at Jerusalem, to apprehend them; and accordingly Saul was sent to Damascus, to apprehend what Christians he could find in that city, and bring them bound to Jerusalem.

But it was the will of Providence he should be employed in a work of a very different nature; and, accordingly, he was stopped in his journey. For as he was travelling between Jerusalem and Damascus, to execute the commission of the Jewish Sanhedrim, a refulgent light, far exceeding the brightness of the sun, darted upon him; at which both he and his companions were terribly amazed and confounded, and immediately fell prostrate on the ground. While they lay in this state, a voice was heard in the Hebrew language, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" To which Saul replied, "Who art thou, Lord?" And was immediately answered, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." As if the blessed Jesus had said, "All thy attempts to extirpate the faith in me will prove abortive; and, like kicking against the spikes, wound and torment thyself."

Saul was sufficiently convinced of his folly in having acted against Jesus, whom he was now assured to be the true Messiah, and asked, "Lord what wilt thou have me to

do?" On which the blessed Jesus replied, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.'

The company which were with him heard the voice, but did not see the person who spake from heaven. In all probability they were ignorant of the Hebrew language, and therefore only heard a confused sound; for the apostle himself tells us, that "they heard not the voice of him that spake;" that is, they did not understand what was spoken.

The apostle now arose from the earth, but found himself deprived of sight; the resplendent brightness of the vision being too intense for mortal eyes to behold. His companions therefore led him by the hand to the city of Damascus, where he entered the house of Judas, and remained there three days without sight; nor did he either eat or drink, but spent his time in prayer to the Almighty, beseeching him to pardon the sins of his ignorance and blinded zeal.

In the meantime our blessed Saviour appeared in a vision to Ananias (a very devout and religious man, highly esteemed by all the inhabitants of Damascus, though he professed the religion of the crucified Jesus), commanding him to go into such a street in the city, and inquire in the house of Judas for "one Saul of Tarsus," then offering up the most fervent prayers to the throne of grace. "And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus; for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight."

Ananias, who was ever ready to obey the commands of the Most High, startled at the name, having heard of the bloody practices of Saul at Jerusalem, and what commission he was now come to execute in Damascus. He, therefore, suspected that his conversion was nothing more than a snare artfully laid by him against the Christians. But our blessed Saviour soon removed his apprehensions, by telling him that his suspicions were entirely without foundation; and that he had now taken him as a chosen vessel, to preach the gospel, both to the Jews and Gentiles, and even before the greatest monarchs of the earth. "Go thy way," said he, "for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." At the same time he acquainted him with the great persecutions he should undergo for the sake of the gospel. "For I will show him how

great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

This quieted the fears of Ananias, who immediately obeyed the heavenly vision, repaired to the house of Judas, and laying his hands upon Saul, addressed him in words to this effect:—"That Jesus," said he, "who appeared to thee in the way, hath sent me to restore thy sight, and, by the infusion of his Spirit, to give thee the knowledge of those truths which thou hast blindly and ignorantly persecuted; but who now is willing to receive thee by baptism into his church, and make thee a member of his body."

This speech was no sooner pronounced, than there fell from his eyes thick films, resembling scales, and he received his sight; and after baptism conversed with the Christians at Damascus. Nor did he only converse with them; he also, to the great astonishment of the whole church, preached the gospel to those Christians he came with an intention to destroy; at the same time boldly asserting, "that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God," and proving it to the Jews with such demonstrative evidence that they were confounded, and were utterly unable to answer him.

CHAPTER II.

Continuation of the Life of St. Paul, from the Time of his Conversion till the Council was held at Jerusalem.

THIS wonderful convert, at the instance of the divine command retired into Arabia Petræa, where he received a full revelation of all the mysteries of Christianity; for he himself declares that he conferred not with flesh and blood. Having preached in several parts of that country some time, he returned again to Damascus, applying himself with the utmost assiduity to the great work of the ministry; frequenting the synagogues there, powerfully confuting the objections commonly made by the descendants of Jacob against Jesus of Nazareth, and converting great numbers of Jews and Gentiles.

He was, indeed, remarkably zealous in his preaching, and blessed with a very extraordinary method of reasoning, whereby he proved the essential doctrines of Christianity beyond exception. This irritated the Jews to the highest degree; and at length, after two or three years' continuance in those parts, they found means to prevail on the governor of Damascus to have him put to death. But they knew it would be difficult to take him, as he

had many friends in the city; they therefore kept themselves on a continual watch, searched all the houses where they supposed he might conceal himself, and also obtained a guard from the governor to observe the gates, in order to prevent his escaping from them.

In this difficulty his Christian friends were far from deserting him: they tried every method that offered to procure his escape; but finding it impossible for him to pass through either of the gates of the city, they let him down from one of their houses through a window in a basket, over the wall; by which means the cruel designs of his enemies were rendered abortive.

Having thus escaped from his malicious persecutors, he repaired to Jerusalem, and on his arrival addressed himself to the church. But they, knowing well the former temper and principles of this great persecutor, shunned his company, till Barnabas brought him to Peter, who was not yet cast into prison, and to James, bishop of Jerusalem, informing them of his miraculous conversion, and that he had preached the gospel with the greatest boldness in the synagogues of Damascus; upon which they gladly received him, and familiarly entertained him fifteen days.

During this interval, he was remarkably assiduous in preaching the gospel of the Son of God, and confuting the Hellenist Jews with the greatest courage and resolution. But snares were laid for him, as malice can as easily cease to be, as to remain inactive. Being warned by God in a vision that his testimony would not be received at Jerusalem, he thought proper to depart, and preach the gospel to the Gentiles. Accordingly, being conducted by his brethren to Cesarea Philippi, he set sail for Tarsus, his native city; from whence he was soon after brought by Barnabas to Antioch, to assist him in propagating Christianity in that city.

In this employment he spent one whole year, and had the satisfaction of seeing the gospel flourish in a very remarkable manner.

It was in this city that the disciples first acquired the name of Christians, before which they were styled Nazarenes; but this appellation soon prevailed all over the world, and the latter was in a few ages almost entirely forgotten.

About this time a terrible famine, foretold by Agabus, happened in several parts of the Roman empire, particularly Judea, which induced the Christians at Antioch to compassionate the miseries of their brethren at Jerusalem. They accordingly raised considerable contri-

butions for their relief, which they sent to the capital of Judea by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, who, immediately after executing their commission, returned to Antioch. But while they were performing the public exercises of their religion, it was revealed to them by the Holy Ghost, that they should "set apart Barnabas and Saul," to preach the gospel in other places: which was accordingly done, and they were immediately deputed for that service by prayer, fasting, and the imposition of hands.

The first place they visited was Seleucia, where they did not continue long, but sailed for Cyprus; and at Salamis, a great city in that island, they preached in the synagogue of the Jews. From thence they removed to Paphos, the residence of Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of the island, a man of great wisdom and prudence, but miserably seduced by the wicked artifices of "Bar-Jesus," a Jewish impostor, who styled himself Elymas, or the magician, who also vehemently opposed the apostles, and kept the proconsul from embracing the faith.

The proconsul, however, called for the apostles, who, after severely checking Elymas for his malicious opposition to the truth, told him the divine vengeance was now ready to seize upon him; and immediately he was deprived of his sight. The vengeance of the Almighty was remarkably displayed in this punishment, by depriving him of his bodily eyes, who had so wilfully and maliciously shut those of his mind against the light of the gospel, and also endeavoured to keep others in darkness and ignorance. This miracle convinced the proconsul of the truth of the doctrines taught by the apostles, and made him a convert to the faith.

St. Paul, after this remarkable success in Cyprus, repaired to Phrygia, in Pamphylia; and taking another with him in the room of Mark, who was gone to Jerusalem, travelled to Antioch, the metropolis of Pisidia.

Soon after their arrival, they entered the synagogue of the Jews on the Sabbath-day: and after the reading of the law Paul, being invited by the rulers of the synagogue, delivered himself in the following manner:—Hearken, all ye descendants of Jacob, and ye that fear the Almighty, to the words of my mouth. The God of Israel made choice of our fathers, and loved them when they had no city of their own to dwell in, but were strangers and slaves in Egypt, bringing them from thence with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm; fed them in the wilderness forty years; and would not suffer his anger to arise

against them, though they often provoked him in the desert. On their arrival in the land he promised their fathers, he destroyed the nations that inhabited it, and placed them in that fruitful country, dividing it to them by lot.

When they were settled in the land, he gave them Judges during four hundred and fifty years, till Samuel the prophet. But on their desiring a king, he placed over them Saul the son of Kish, a Benjamite, who reigned about forty years. After his death, he placed David on the throne of Israel, giving him this testimony, "I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will." And according to his promise, the Almighty hath raised up to the sons of David a Saviour, Jesus, "which is Christ the Lord;" the baptism of repentance having been preached before his coming by John. And as his forerunner executed his office, he asked his followers, "Whom think ye that I am?" You must not mistake me for the Messiah: he will soon follow me; but I am not worthy to perform the meanest office for him.

To you, therefore, ye descendants of Abraham, and all others who fear the Almighty, "is the word of this salvation sent." For the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and rulers of Israel, being ignorant of him, and the voices of the prophets, though read every Sabbath in the synagogues, fulfilled their predictions by condemning the immaculate Son of the Most High. They found, indeed, no fault in him, though they earnestly desired Pilate that he might be slain.

When everything that had been written by the prophets concerning him was fulfilled, they took him from the tree, and deposited his body in the chambers of the grave. But death had no power to detain him; his Almighty Father raised him from the habitations of the dead. After which he was seen for many days by his disciples, who attended him from Galilee, and were the witnesses chosen by Omnipotence of these great and miraculous works. And we now declare unto you glad tidings; namely, that the promise made by the Almighty to our forefathers, he hath performed to us their children, by raising Jesus from the dead. The prophet David also said, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." He also foretold that he should return from the chambers of the dust, and no more be subject to corruption. "I will give him," said he, "the sure mercies of David." And again, "thou shalt not suffer thine holy One to see corruption." Now this

prophecy must relate to the Messiah; for David himself, after he had swayed the sceptre of Israel a certain time, fell asleep, was deposited in the chambers of the grave, and his flesh saw corruption: but the great Son of David whom the Almighty raised from the dead, never saw corruption.

Be it therefore known unto you, men and brethren, that through this Saviour is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. It is by his merits we are justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. Be careful, therefore, lest what was foretold by the prophets come upon you: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which you will in nowise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

This spirited address of the great apostle carried with it its own weight, and obtained from the converted Jews a request that it should again be delivered the ensuing Sabbath, when almost the whole city flocked to hear the apostle; at which the Jews were filled with envy, and contradicted Paul, uttering many blasphemous expressions against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. But their opposition could not daunt the apostles, who boldly declared that our blessed Saviour had charged them to preach the gospel first to the Jews, but as they so obstinately rejected it, they were now to address themselves to the Gentiles: who hearing this, rejoiced exceedingly, magnifying the works of the Almighty, and many of them embraced the doctrines of the gospel.

This increased the malice and fury of the Jews, who, by false and artful insinuations, prevailed on some of the more bigoted and honourable women to bring over their husbands to their party; by which means Paul and Barnabas were driven out of the city. At which the apostles departed, shaking off the dust of their feet, as a testimony of the sense they had of the ingratitude and infidelity of the Jews.

From Antioch they went to Iconium, the metropolis of Lycaonia, a province of the Lesser Asia, where they entered into the synagogue of the Jews, notwithstanding the ill-treatment they had met with from their brethren in other places: for so great was their zeal for the gospel, that they were not to be deterred from preaching it by ill-usage, however violent. Therefore, according to their usual method, they again began their preaching in the assembly of the Israelites; and the Almighty so far assisted their endeavours, that many, both Jews and proselytes, believed. Their success

encouraged them to continue a considerable time in the city, to instruct the converts, and confirm their faith by miracles. But though they had gained a considerable part of the city to the faith, yet many continued in their infidelity; and the old leaven of Jewish malice began again to ferment; and the unbelieving Jews, having stirred up many Gentiles against the apostles, at last prevailed on the multitude to stone them. But the apostles, having timely notice of their design, fled from the city, and travelled to Lystra, where they preached the gospel to the inhabitants, and those who dwelt in the adjacent country.

Among the converts at Lystra, was a man who had been lame from his mother's womb, and had never walked. But Paul, perceiving that he had faith to be healed, thought proper to add the cure of his body to that of his soul; knowing that it would not only be beneficial to him. but to all the rest of the believers, by confirming their faith. And that the miracle might be wrought in the most conspicuous manner, he in the midst of the congregation said in an audible voice to the man, "Stand upright on thy feet." And the words were no sooner pronounced, than his strength was at once restored, and he leaped up and walked.

The people who beheld this miracle well knew that it was not wrought by any human power; but having been initiated in the superstitious customs of the Heathens, they cried out, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." Accordingly they called Barnabas Jupiter, because of his venerable gravity; and Paul Mercury, from his eloquence. Nor was it long before the whole city resounded with acclamations; so that almost all the inhabitants gathered themselves together, and, preceded by the priest of Jupiter, and oxen dressed in garlands, they came to the house where the apostles were, intending to do sacrifice to them.

But as soon as Barnabas and Paul understood their intentions, they were greatly affected at this superstitious design; and, rending their clothes, to express their grief and abhorrence of the action, ran to them, crying out, "Ye men of Lystra, ye are mistaken in the objects of your worship; for though we have done many miracles in the name and by the power of Christ, yet we are no more than men, and subject to the same bodily infirmities with yourselves, and preach unto you the glad tidings of salvation that ye may forsake the vanities of this world, and turn to the living God, who created the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all the crea-

tures they contain. This omnipotent Being suffered all nations formerly to walk in their own ways, though he never left himself without witness, doing the greatest good to the children of men; it is he that sendeth rain from heaven, and crowneth the year with fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with joy and gladness."

This argument of the apostles had the desired effect; and the people were at last, though with difficulty, persuaded to lay aside their intended idolatrous sacrifice. And surely no argument could be more proper to affect the minds of the people. Is it possible to survey the several parts of the creation, and not discover in every place evident traces of an infinite wisdom, power, and goodness? Who can survey universal nature, and not at once see and admire its great Author, who has disposed of all created things with such order and regularity as to display in the clearest manner his own power and glory? Behold the sun! how justly is that source of light and heat placed in the centre of the planetary system, that each may enjoy its destined share of his prolific beams; so that the earth is not burned by a too near approach, nor chilled by the northern blasts, from too great a recess; but impregnated with fruits and flowers by the happy influence of a vital heat, and crowned with luxuriant plenty by the benign influence of the season. It is that omnipotent Being, who "poises the balancings of the clouds, that divides a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, and a way for the lightning of the thunder." Who can "bind the benign influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" Or who can "bring forth Mazzaroth in his season, or guide Arcturus with his sons?" Do these happen by chance, or by the secret appointment of infinite Wisdom? Who can contemplate the wonderful properties of the air, the great treasury of vital breath, and not reflect on the divine Wisdom that formed it? If we survey the earth, we there discover the footsteps of an almighty Being, who "stretcheth the north over the empty space, and hangeth the earth upon nothing;" filling it with a great variety of admirable and useful creatures, and maintaining them all by the bounty of his hand. It is he that clothes the grass with a delightful verdure, that "crowns the year with his loving-kindness," and causes "the valleys to stand thick with corn." It is he that "maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains, and herbs for the service of man." He adorns the lilies of the field, that neither toil nor spin, with a glory that excels the pomp and grandeur

of Solomon's court. "He shut up the sea with doors," and said, "hitherto shalt thou come, and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." It is that Almighty Being that arrests the storm, and smooths the tempestuous billows of the deep; that delivereth the mariner from all his troubles, and bringeth his ship into the desired haven of safety. How reasonable, therefore, is it that we should worship and adore this kind Creator, and not transfer the honours due to him alone, to frail mortals; much less to dumb idols, the work of men's hands!

The apostles indefatigably persevered in the execution of their important commission, declaring wherever they went the glad tidings of salvation, through repentance unto life, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But the malice of the Jews still pursued them; for some of these bigoted Israelites coming from Antioch and Iconium, exasperated and stirred up the multitude; so that those very persons who could hardly be restrained from offering sacrifice to them, now used them like slaves, stoning them in so cruel a manner, that Paul was thought to be dead, and as such they dragged him out of the city; but while the Christians of Lystra were attending on his probably in order to carry him to the grave, he arose and returned with them into the city, and the next day departed with Barnabas to Derbe, where they preached the gospel and converted many; no danger being able to terrify them from the work of the ministry, and publishing the glad tidings of salvation in every place.

They did not, however, long continue at Derbe, but returned to Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, and Pisidia, confirming the Christians of those places in the faith, earnestly persuading them to persevere, and not be discouraged by those troubles and persecutions which they must expect would attend the profession of the gospel. And that the affairs of the church might be conducted with more regularity, they ordained elders and pastors to teach, to instruct, and to watch over them; and then left them to the protection of the Almighty, to whose care they commended them by prayer and fasting.

After leaving Antioch, they passed through Pisidia, and came to Pamphylia; and after preaching the gospel at Perga, they went down to Attalia.

Having thus finished the circuit of their ministry, they returned back to Antioch, in Syria, whence they at first departed. Here they summoned the church, and gave them

an account of their ministry, the success with which it had been attended in different parts, and how great a door had thus been opened for the conversion of the Gentile world.

While St. Paul continued at Antioch, that famous controversy with regard to the observation of the Jewish ceremonies under the Christian dispensation, was set on foot by certain Jewish converts, to the great disturbance of the whole church; and it was determined to send Paul and Barnabas to consult with the apostles and church at Jerusalem, that this affair might be settled on the most solid foundation. On their arrival at Jerusalem, they first addressed themselves to Peter, James, and John, the pillars of that church, by whom they were kindly entertained, and admitted to the right hand of fellowship: and perceiving, by the account given them by St. Paul, that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to him, as that of the circumcision was to Peter, they agreed that Peter should preach to the Jews, and Paul to the Gentiles. This being determined, a council was summoned, wherein Peter declared his opinion, and Paul and Barnabas acquainted them with the great things God, by their ministry, had done among the Gentiles; a plain evidence that they were accepted by the Almighty, though uncircumcised, as well as the Jews, with all their legal rites and privileges; accordingly, it was unanimously determined that the Gentiles were not under the obligation of the law of Moses, and therefore that some persons of their own church should be joined with Paul and Barnabas, to carry the decrees of the council to Antioch, for their farther satisfaction in this matter. Nothing tends more to impede the progress of vital religion than a bigoted attachment to unessential forms and modes.

CHAPTER III.

Transactions of this great apostle, from the time of the Synod at Jerusalem, till his preaching at Athens.

THE controversy concerning the observation of Jewish ceremonies in the Christian church being decided in favour of St. Paul, he and his companions returned back to Antioch; and soon after Peter himself came down. On reading the decretal epistle in the church the converts conversed freely and inoffensively with the Gentiles, till some of the Jews coming thither from Jerusalem, Peter withdrew his conversation, as if it had been a thing unwarrantable and unlawful. By

such a strange method of proceeding, the minds of many were dissatisfied, and their consciences very uneasy. St. Paul with the greatest concern observed it, and publicly rebuked Peter with that sharpness and severity which his unwarrantable practice deserved.

Soon after this dispute, Paul and Barnabas resolved to visit the churches they had planted among the Gentiles, and Barnabas was desirous of taking with them his cousin Mark; but this Paul strenuously opposed, as he had left them in their former journey. This trifling dispute rose to such a height, that these two great apostles, and fellow-labourers in the gospel, parted: Barnabas, taking Mark with him, repaired to Cyprus, his native country; and Paul, having made choice of Silas, and recommended the success of his undertaking to the care of Divine Providence, set forward on his intended journey.

They first visited the churches of Syria and Cilicia, confirming the people in the faith by their instructions and exhortations. Hence they sailed to Crete, where Paul preached the gospel, and constituted Titus to be the first bishop and pastor of the island, leaving him to settle those affairs of the church which time would not permit the apostle to settle himself. Thence Paul and Silas returned back into Cilicia, and came to Lystra, where they found Timothy, whose father was a Greek, but his mother a Jewish convert, and by her he had been brought up under all the advantages of a pious and religious education, especially with regard to the holy Scriptures, which he had studied with the greatest assiduity and success. This person St. Paul designed for the companion of his travels, and a special instrument in the ministry of the gospel. But knowing that his being uncircumcised would prove a stumbling-block to the Jews, he caused him to be circumcised; being willing in lawful and indifferent matters to comform himself to the tempers and apprehensions of men, in order to save their souls. In this instance the apostle evinced much prudence, well knowing that inveterate prejudices in religious matters are not easily overcome; for which reason he is said to become all things to all men.

Everything being ready for their journey, St. Paul and his companions departed from Lystra, passing through Phrygia, and the country of Galatia, where the apostle was entertained with the greatest kindness and veneration, the people looking upon him as an angel sent immediately from heaven; and being by revelation forbidden to go into Asia,

he was commanded by a second vision to repair to Macedonia, to preach the gospel. Accordingly, our apostle prepared to pass from Asia into Europe.

Here St. Luke joined them, and became ever after the inseparable companion of St. Paul, who being desirous of finding the speediest passage into Macedonia, took ship with his companions Silas, Luke, and Timothy, and came to Samothracia, an island in the Ægean Sea, not far from Thrace; and the next day he went to Neapolis, a port of Macedonia. Leaving Neapolis, they repaired to Philippi, the metropolis of that part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony, where they stayed some days.

In this city Paul, according to his constant practice, preached in a proseucha, or oratory of the Jews, which stood by the river side, at some distance from the city, and was much frequented by the devout women of their religion, who met there to pray and hear the law. To these St. Paul preached the glad tidings of the gospel; and, by the influence of the Spirit of God upon their hearts, converted many, especially a certain woman named Lydia, a Jewish proselyte, a seller of purple in that city, but a native of Thyatira. This woman being baptized, with her whole family, was so importunate with St. Paul and his companions to abide at her house, that they were constrained to accept of her invitation.

During the time of the apostles residing in this city, they continued their daily course of worshipping at the same oratory; and after several days, as they were repairing to the same place of devotion, there met them a damsel who was possessed of a spirit of divination, by whom her masters acquired very great advantage. This woman followed Paul and his companions, crying out, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation!" Paul at first took no notice of her, not being willing to multiply miracles without necessity. But when he saw her following them several days together, he began to be troubled; and, in imitation of his great Master, who would not suffer the devil to acknowledge him, lest his false and lying tongue should prejudice the truth in the minds of men, commanded the spirit, in the name of Jesus, to come out of her. The evil spirit with reluctance obeyed, and left the damsel that very instant.

This miraculous cure proving a great loss to her masters, who acquired large gains from her soothsaying, they were filled with envy and malice against the apostles: and

by their instigation the multitude arose, seized upon Paul and his companions, and hurried them before the magistrates and governors of the colony; accusing them of introducing many innovations which were prejudicial to the state, and unlawful for them to comply with, as being Romans.

The magistrates being concerned for the tranquillity of the state, and jealous of all disturbances, were very forward to punish the offenders, against whom great numbers of the multitude testified; and therefore commanded the officers to strip them, and scourge them severely, as seditious persons.

This was accordingly executed; after which the apostles were committed to close custody, the jailer receiving more than ordinary charge to keep them safely; and he accordingly thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. But the most obscure dungeon, or the pitchy mantle of the night, cannot intercept the beams of divine joy and comfort from the souls of pious men. Their minds were all serenity; and at midnight they prayed and sang praises so loud, that they were heard in every part of the prison. Nor were their prayers offered to the throne of grace in vain; an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, opened the doors, loosed the chains, and set the prisoners at liberty.

This convulsion of nature aroused the jailer from his sleep; who, concluding from what he saw that all his prisoners were escaped, was going to put a period to his life; but Paul observing him, hastily cried, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." The keeper was now as greatly surprised at the goodness of the apostles, as he was before terrified at the thoughts of their escape; and calling for a light, he came immediately into the presence of the apostles, fell down at their feet, and took them from the dungeon, and brought them to his own house, washed their stripes, and begged of them to instruct him in the knowledge of that God who was so mighty to save.

St. Paul readily granted his request, and replied, that if he believed in Jesus Christ, he might be saved, with his whole house; accordingly the jailer with all his family were, after a competent instruction, baptized and received as members of the church of Christ. How happy a change does the doctrine of the gospel make in the minds of men! how does it smooth the roughest tempers, and instil the sweetest principles of civility and good-nature into the minds of men! He who

but a few moments before tyrannized over the apostles with the most cruel usage, now treats them with the greatest respect, and the highest marks of kindness!

As soon as it was day, the magistrates, either hearing what had happened, or reflecting on what they had done as too harsh and unjustifiable, sent their sergeant to the jailer with orders to discharge the apostles. The jailer joyfully delivered the message, and bid them "depart in peace:" but Paul, that he might make the magistrates sensible what injury they had done them, and how unjustly they had punished them without examination or trial, sent them word, that as they thought proper to scourge and imprison Romans contrary to the laws of the empire, he expected they should come themselves, and make them some satisfaction.

The magistrates were terrified at this message; well knowing how dangerous it was to provoke the formidable power of the Romans, who never suffered any freeman to be beaten uncondemned; they came therefore to the prison, and very submissively entreated the apostles to depart without any farther disturbance.

This small recompense for the cruel usage they had received was accepted by the meek followers of the blessed Jesus; they left the prison, and retired to the house of Lydia, where they comforted their brethren with an account of their deliverance, and departed; having laid the foundation of a very eminent church, as it appears from St. Paul's epistle to the Philippians.

Leaving Philippi, Paul and his companions continued their journey towards the west, until they came to Thessalonica, the metropolis of Macedonia, about a hundred and twenty miles from Philippi. On their arrival at Thessalonica, Paul, according to his custom, went into the synagogue of the Jews, and preached unto his countrymen; the ungrateful usage he had met with in the other places not discouraging him in persevering in so glorious a work. His doctrine, however, was strenuously opposed by the Jews, who would not allow Jesus to be the Messiah, because of his ignominious death.

During the stay of the apostles at Thessalonica, they lodged in the house of a certain Christian named Jason, who entertained them very courteously. But the Jews would not suffer the apostles to continue at rest. They refused to embrace the gospel themselves, and therefore envied its success, and determined to oppose its progress. Accordingly they gathered together a great number of lewd and wicked wretches,

who beset the house of Jason, intending to take Paul, and deliver him up to an incensed multitude. But in this they were disappointed, Paul and Silas being removed thence by the Christians, and concealed in some other part of the city.

Their fury, however, was rather exasperated than lessened at losing their prey: and as they could not find the apostles of the blessed Jesus, they determined to be revenged on Jason, who had concealed them; accordingly they seized on him with some others of the brethren, and carried them before the magistrates of the city, accusing them, as they had before done the apostles themselves at Philippi, of disturbing the peace of the empire, and setting up Jesus as a king, in derogation of the emperor's dignity and authority. This accusation induced both the people and the magistrates to be their enemies; and though Jason was only accused of harbouring those innovators, yet the magistrates could not be prevailed upon to dismiss him and his companions till they had given security for their appearance.

As soon as the tumult was over, the Thessalonians who had been converted by them sent away Paul and Silas by night to Berea, a city about fifty miles south of Thessalonica, but out of the power of their enemies. Here also Paul's great love for his countrymen the Jews, and his earnest desire of their salvation, excited him to preach to them in particular; accordingly he entered into their synagogue, and explained the gospel unto them, proving out of the Scriptures of the Old Testament the truth of the doctrines he advanced. These Jews were of a more ingenuous and candid temper than those of Thessalonica: and as they heard him, with great reverence and attention, expound and apply the Scriptures, so they searched diligently whether his proofs were proper and pertinent, and consonant to the sense of the texts he referred to: and having found everything to be agreeable to what Paul had advanced, many of them believed; and several Gentiles following their example, became obedient to the faith, among whom were several women of quality. The news of this remarkable success was carried to Thessalonica, and greatly incensed the inveterate enemies of the gospel there, who accordingly repaired to Berea, and raised tumults against the apostle; so that Paul, to avoid their fury, was forced to leave the town; but Silas and Timothy, either less known or less envied, continued still there.

Paul leaving Berea, under the conduct of certain guides, it was said he designed to retire by sea out of Greece, that his restless enemies

might cease their persecution; but the guides, according to Paul's order, brought him to Athens, and left him there, after receiving from him an order for Silas and Timotheus to repair to him as soon as possible.

While St. Paul continued at Athens, expecting the arrival of Silas and Timothy, he walked up and down, to take a more accurate survey of the city, which he found miserably overrun with superstition and idolatry. The inhabitants were remarkably religious and devout; they had a great number of gods, whom they adored; false, indeed, they were, but such as they, being destitute of revelation, accounted true: and so very careful were they that no deity should want due honour from them, that they had an altar inscribed "to the Unknown God." A great variety of reasons are given for this inscription: some affirm, that it was the name which the Pagans generally gave to the God of the Jews; but others think that it included all the gods of Asia, Europe, and Africa.

These superstitious practices much grieved the spirit of the apostle; accordingly, he exerted all his strength for their conversion: he disputed on the Sabbath-days in the synagogues of the Jews; and at other times took all opportunities of preaching to the Athenians the coming of the Messiah to save the world.

This doctrine was equally new and strange to the Athenians; and though they did not persecute him as the Jews did, yet his preaching Jesus was considered by the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers as a fabulous legend; and, by the more sober part, as a discovery of some new gods, whom they had not yet placed in their temples: and though they were not unwilling to receive any new deities, yet as the Areopagus, the supreme court of the city, was to judge of all gods to whom public worship might be allowed, they brought him before those judges, to give an account of his doctrine.

Paul being placed before the judges of this high assembly, readily gave them an account of his doctrine in a grave and elegant speech; wherein he did not tell them they were horrible and gross idolators, lest he should offend them, and thereby prevent them from listening to his reasons; but having commended them for their religious dispositions, he took occasion, from the altar inscribed to the "Unknown God," to make a proper defence of his doctrine. "I endeavour," said he, "only to explain that altar to you, and manifest the nature of that God whom ye ignorantly worship. The true God is he that made the world, and all things therein;

and who, being Lord over all, dwells not in temples made with hands, nor is he to be worshipped in lifeless idols. As he is the creator of all things, he cannot be confined to the workmanship of man, whether temples or statues; nor stand in need of sacrifices, since he is the fountain of life to all things. He made from one common original the whole race of mankind, and hath wisely determined their dependence on him, that they might be obliged to seek after him and serve him. A truth perceivable in the darkest state of ignorance, and acknowledged by one of your own poets. If this be the nature of God, it is surely the highest absurdity to represent him by an image or similitude. The divine patience hath been too much exercised already with such gross abuses in religion; but now God expects a thorough reformation, having sent his Son Jesus Christ to make himself known to the world, and at the same time to inform them that he hath appointed a day of general judgment, when the religion of mankind shall be tried by the test of the gospel, before his only begotten Son, who is appointed sole judge of the quick and the dead, and whose commission to that high office hath been ratified by the Almighty, in raising him from the dead."

On his mentioning the resurrection, some of the philosophers mocked and derided him; others, more modest, but not satisfied with the proofs he had given, gravely answered, "We would hear thee again of this matter." After which, Paul departed from the court; but not without some success, for a few of his auditors believed and attended his instructions.

Thus boldly did this intrepid servant and soldier of Jesus Christ assert the cause of his divine Master, among the great, the wise, and the learned; and reason with great persuasion and eloquence on the nature of God, and the manner in which he has commanded his creatures to worship him, even in spirit and in truth.

CHAPTER IV.

Success of St. Paul's Ministry at Corinth and Ephesus.

DURING St. Paul's stay at Athens, Timothy, according to the order he had received, came to him out of Macedonia; and brought an account that the Christians at Thessalonica were under persecution from their fellow-citizens, ever since his departure: at which St. Paul was greatly concerned, and at first

inclined to visit them in prison, to confirm them in the faith they had embraced; but being hindered by the enemies of the gospel, he sent Timothy to comfort them, and put them in mind of what they had at first heard, namely, that persecution would be the constant attendant on their profession.

On Timothy's departure, St. Paul left Athens, and travelled to Corinth, a very populous place, and famous for its trade. Here he found Aquila and Priscilla his wife, lately come from Italy, having been banished from Rome by the decree of Claudius. And they being of the same trade he himself had learned in his youth, he wrought with them, that he might not be burdensome to the new converts;—honest ministers are not mercenary.

After some stay at Corinth, the apostle was joined by Silas and Timothy, and disputed frequently in the synagogue, reasoning, and proving that Jesus was the true Messiah. This exasperated the Jews to the greatest degree, and what they could not conquer by argument and force of reason, they endeavoured to carry by noise and clamour, blended with blasphemies and revilings; the last refuge of an impotent and baffled cause. But St. Paul, to testify his resentment, shook his garments, and told them, that since they were determined to pull down the vengeance of heaven upon their own heads, he was absolutely guiltless and innocent, and would henceforth address himself to the Gentiles.

Accordingly he left them, and repaired to the house of Justus, a religious proselyte, where, by his preaching and miracles, he converted great numbers to the faith; among whom was Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and Caius, and Stephanus, who, with their families, were baptized, and admitted members of the Christian church.

But, lest the ungrateful, yea, cruel behaviour of unbelievers, should discourage this able minister from prosecuting the glorious work of the conversion of sinners, our dear Redeemer appeared to him in a vision, and told him, that, notwithstanding the bad success he had hitherto met with, there was a large harvest to be gathered in that place; that he should not be afraid of his enemies, but preach the gospel boldly and securely, for that he himself would protect and preserve him.

About this time he seems to have written his first epistle to the Thessalonians, Silas and Timothy being lately returned from thence, and delivered the message for which he had sent them thither. The principal design of this epistle is to con-

firm them in the belief of the Christian religion, and to excite them to persevere in it, notwithstanding all the malice of their enemies, and the persecutions they must expect to suffer, and to instruct them in the duties of a religious life.

During the apostle's stay at Corinth, he wrote his second epistle to the Thessalonians, to supply his absence. In this epistle he again endeavours to confirm their minds in the truth of the gospel, and prevent their being shaken with those troubles which the wicked and unbelieving Jews would be continually raising against them. And because some passages in his former epistle, relating to the destruction of the Jews, had been misunderstood, as if the day of the Lord was near at hand, he rectifies these mistakes, and shows the signs that must precede our Lord's coming to judgment.

St. Paul, on his leaving the church at Corinth, took ship at Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, for Syria, taking with him Aquila and Priscilla; and on his arrival at Ephesus he preached awhile in the synagogue of the Jews, promising to return to them after keeping the passover at Jerusalem. Accordingly he again took ship, and landed at Cesarea, and from thence travelled to Jerusalem, where he kept the feast, visited the church, and then repaired to Antioch. Here he stayed some time, and then traversed the country of Galatia and Phrygia, confirming the newly converted Christians, till he came to Ephesus.

During the time he spent in this large circuit, Providence took care of the churches of Ephesus and Corinth by the means of one Apollos, an eloquent Jew of Alexandria, well acquainted with the law, and the writings of the prophets. This man coming to Ephesus, though he was only instructed in the rudiments of Christianity, and John's baptism, yet taught with great courage, and a most powerful zeal. After being fully instructed in the faith by Aquila and Priscilla, he passed over into Achaia, being furnished with recommendatory letters by the churches of Ephesus and Corinth. He was of the greatest service in Achaia, in watering what Paul had planted, confirming the disciples, and powerfully convincing the Jews that Jesus was the true Messiah promised in the Scriptures.

While Apollos was thus employed, St. Paul returned to Ephesus, where he fixed his abode for three years, bringing with him Gaius of Derbe, Aristarchus, a native of Thessalonica, Timotheus and Erastus of Corinth, and Titus. The first thing he did after his arrival was to examine certain disciples, "whether they had

received the Holy Ghost since they believed?" To which they answered, "That the doctrine they had received promised nothing of that nature, nor had they ever heard that such an extraordinary spirit had of late been bestowed upon the church."

This answer surprised the apostle, who asked them in what name they had been baptized; since in the Christian form the name of the Holy Ghost was always expressed? they replied, that they had only received John's baptism. Upon which the apostle informed them, that though John's baptism commanded nothing but repentance, yet it tacitly implied the whole doctrine of Christ and the Holy Ghost. When they heard this, they were baptized according to the form prescribed by Christ himself, that is, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and after the apostle had prayed, and laid his hands over them, they received the gift of tongues, and other miraculous powers.

After this, he entered into the Jewish synagogues, where for the first three months he contended and disputed with the Jews, endeavouring with great earnestness and resolution to convince them of the truth of the Christian religion. But when, instead of success, he met with nothing but obstinacy and infidelity, he left the synagogue, and taking those with him whom he had instrumentally converted, instructed them, and others who resorted to him, in the school of one Tyrannus, a place where scholars used to be instructed. In this manner he continued to preach the gospel two whole years; by which means the Jews and proselytes had an opportunity of hearing the glad tidings of salvation: and because miracles are the clearest evidence of a divine commission, the Almighty was pleased to testify the doctrine which St. Paul delivered, by amazing and miraculous operations, many of which were of a peculiar and extraordinary nature; for he not only healed those that came to him, but if napkins or handkerchiefs were only touched by him, and applied to the sick, their diseases immediately vanished, and the evil spirits departed out of those that were possessed by them.

About this time the apostle wrote his Epistle to the Galatians; for he had heard that since his departure corrupt opinions had crept in among them with regard to the necessity of observing the legal rites; and that several impostors had found admittance into the church, who knew no better method of undermining the doctrine he had planted

there, than by vilifying his person, slighting him as an apostle only at second hand, not to be compared with Peter, James, and John, who had familiarly conversed with Christ in the days of his flesh, and been immediately deputed by him. In this epistle, therefore, he reproves them with some necessary severity, for being so soon led out of the right way wherein he had placed them, and so easily suffering themselves to be imposed upon by the crafty artifices of seducers. He vindicates the honour of his apostleship, and the immediate receiving his commission from Christ, wherein he shows that he was not inferior to the very best of the apostles. He largely refutes those Judaical opinions that had tainted and infected them; and, in the conclusion, instructs them in the rules and duties of a holy life.

During St. Paul's stay at Ephesus, an accident happened, which was attended with great trouble and danger. In this city was the celebrated temple of Diana, a structure so magnificent for beauty, riches, and magnitude, that it was reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world. But what increased its fame and reputation was an image of Diana kept there which the idolatrous priests persuaded the people was made by Jupiter himself and dropped down from heaven; for which reason it was held in great veneration, not only at Ephesus, but throughout all Asia. So that people procured silver shrines, or figures of this temple, of such a size as to carry in their pockets, either for curiosity, or to stir up their devotion. This proved the source of a great deal of business to the silversmiths of Ephesus; of whom one Demetrius was the chief. This man plainly perceiving that Christianity tended to the subversion of idolatry, and consequently to the ruin of their gainful employment, called all the artists together, and pathetically represented to them how inevitably they must be reduced to a state of poverty if they suffered Paul to bring their temple and goddess into contempt; by persuading the people, as he did, that they were no gods which were made with hands.

This speech of Demetrius fired them with a zeal which they could no longer contain; so that they cried out as with one voice, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" They should indeed have considered, that if their goddess was able to defend herself against the doctrines preached by Paul, neither she nor the temple were in any danger: whereas, if Paul was able to destroy their gods, it was in vain for them to resist him. But interest and



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superstition combining in the minds of a bigoted multitude, admitted of no reason. They were all fired with zeal for their goddess, and determined if they could find Paul to expose him to the beasts in the theatre; for it was customary in those days, at the celebration of their public games and festivals, to expose slaves to the rage of wild beasts, for the diversion of the spectators. The whole city was filled with the tumult; and the crowd missing Paul laid hold on Gaius and Aristarchus, two Macedonians of Paul's company, and hurried them to the wild beasts. Paul, who was at present in a place of security, hearing of the danger to which his brethren were exposed, was very desirous of venturing after them, in order to speak in their behalf; but he was at last dissuaded from it, not only by the Christians, but also by the Gentile governors of the theatrical games, who were his friends, and who assured him that he would only endanger himself, without rescuing his companions.

The noise and confusion of the multitude was now prodigious, most of them not knowing the reason for which they were come together; and therefore some said one thing, and some another. In this distraction, Alexander, a Jewish convert was singled out by the multitude, and, by the instigation of the Jews, was going to make his defence; in which, doubtless, he would have laid the whole blame upon Paul; but the multitude perceiving him to be a Jew, and therefore suspecting he was one of Paul's associates, raised another outcry, for near two hours together, wherein nothing could be heard but, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" This confusion brought the town-clerk, who kept the register of the games, into the theatre, to suppress if possible so uncommon a tumult. And having with great difficulty obtained silence, he calmly and discreetly told them, "That the world was sufficiently acquainted with the devotion paid by the Ephesians to the great goddess Diana, and the image which, according to report, fell down from Jupiter; and therefore it was absolutely needless for them to publish it at that time: That if Demetrius and his fraternity had anything to allege against Paul and his companions, the courts were open, and they might bring their accusation against them; or, if they were questioned with regard to the breach of any of their laws, the cause ought to be heard in a regular assembly: That they would do well to consider this, and be quiet; having already rendered themselves obnoxious to the displeasure of the magistrates, if

they should think proper to call them to an account for that day's tumult."

This discourse had the desired effect; the multitude were convinced that they had acted very improperly, and therefore repaired to their respective habitations; and Gaius, Aristarchus, and Alexander were released without any great hurt. But the escape of Paul was so remarkable, that he mentions it as a miraculous deliverance. "We had," says he, "the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God, who raised the dead, who delivered us from so great a death." And in another place he tells us he "fought with beasts at Ephesus;" alluding either to the design of the enraged multitude of throwing him to the wild beasts in the theatre, though their intention was not executed, or to the manners of the people, who sufficiently deserved the character of being savage and brutal in the highest degree.

About this time Paul was informed of some disturbances in the church at Corinth, hatched and fomented by a company of false teachers, crept in among them, who endeavoured to draw them into parties and factions, by persuading one company to be for Peter, another for Paul, and a third for Apollos; as if the principal part of religion consisted in being of this or that denomination, or in a warm active zeal to depreciate or oppose whoever was not of the same sect.

It is a very weak and slender claim when a man holds his religion by no better title than his having joined himself to such or such a sect or congregation, and is remarkably zealous to promote it, to be childishly and passionately clamorous for some person's particular mode of administration, or some particular opinion; as if religion rather consisted in disputes, or in separating from our brethren, than "in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

By these means, schisms and factions broke into the Corinthian church; whereby many wild and extravagant opinions, some of them such as tended to undermine the essential doctrines of Christianity, were planted, and had taken root. To cure these dissensions, St. Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians; wherein he smartly reproves them for their schisms and parties, conjures them to peace and unity, corrects those gross corruptions that had been introduced among them, and particularly resolves those many cases and controversies wherein they had requested his advice and counsel. Soon after, Apollos determining to go to Crete, together with

Zenos, St. Paul sent by them his epistle to Titus, whom he had made bishop of that island, and had left there for propagating the gospel. In this epistle he instructs him fully in the execution of his office, both with regard to himself and others.

CHAPTER V.

Transactions of St. Paul, during the farther Progress of his Ministry, to the Time of his Arraignment before Felix.

SOON after the tumult at Ephesus, St. Paul called the Christians together, and took his leave of them with the most tender expressions of love and affection. He had now spent almost three years at Ephesus, and founded there a very considerable church, of which he had ordained Timothy the first bishop. He first travelled about two hundred miles northward, to Troas, before he took ship, expecting to meet Titus there. But missing him, he proceeded on his voyage to Macedonia.

On his arrival there, he preached the gospel in several places, even as far as Illyricum, now called Sclavonia. During this journey he met with many troubles and dangers; "without were fightings, within were fears;" but God, who comforteth those that are cast down, revived his spirits by the arrival of Titus, who gave him a pleasing account of the good effect his epistle had produced at Corinth. This worthy bishop came thither with large contributions from the church at Corinth; and from the example of those liberal Christians, St. Paul stirred up the Macedonians to imitate their charity, intending to assist the poor Christians at Jerusalem.

During the stay of Titus in Macedonia, Paul wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians, and sent it to them by Titus and Luke. In this epistle he endeavours to rectify what his former epistle had not effected; to vindicate his apostleship from that contempt and scorn, and himself from those slanders and aspersions, which the seducers, who found themselves lashed by his former letter, had cast upon him; together with several other particular cases relative to the church.

About this time also he wrote his first epistle to Timothy, whom he had left at Ephesus; wherein he gives him directions how to conduct himself in the discharge of that great office and authority in the church committed to his care; and instructs him in the particular qualifications of those he should make choice of as bishops and ministers in the church. He likewise gives him in-

structions with regard to his giving orders to deaconesses, and instructing servants; warning him at the same time against that pestilent generation of heretics and seducers that would arise in the church.

During his stay in Greece he went to Corinth, where he wrote his famous epistle to the Romans, which he sent by Phœbe, a deaconess of Cenchrea, near Corinth. His principal intention in this epistle is fully to state and determine the great controversy between the Jews and Gentiles, with regard to the obligations of the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law, and those principal and material points of doctrine depending upon it, namely, Christian liberty, the use of indifferent things, and the like. And, which is the chief intention of all religion, instructs them, and presses them to perform the duties of a holy and pious life, such as the Christian doctrine naturally recommends.

St. Paul being now determined to return to Syria, in order to convey the contributions to the brethren at Jerusalem, set out on his journey; but being informed that the Jews had formed a design of killing and robbing him by the way, he returned back into Macedonia, and came to Philippi, from whence he went to Troas, where he stayed seven days. Here he preached to them on the Lord's day, and continued his discourse till midnight, being himself to depart in the morning. The length of his discourse, and the time of the night, caused some of his audience to be overtaken with sleep, and among them a young man named Eutychus, who fell from the third story, and was taken up dead; but the apostle, by his prayers to the throne of grace, presently restored him to life and health.

How indefatigable was the industry of this great apostle! How closely did he tread in the steps of his great Master, who "went about doing good!" He preached and wrought miracles wherever he came. As a master-builder, he either laid a foundation, or raised the superstructure. He was "instant in season, and out of season," and spared no pains to assist the souls of men.

The night being thus spent in holy exercises, St. Paul took his leave of the brethren in the morning, travelling on foot to Assos, a seaport town, whither he had before sent his companions by sea. Thence they sailed to Mytilene, a city in the isle of Lesbos. The next day they sailed thence, and came over against Chios, and the day following landed at Trogyllium, a promontory of Ionia, near Samos. The next day they came to Miletus, not put-

ting in at Ephesus, because the apostle was resolved, if possible, to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

On his arrival at Miletus, he sent to Ephesus, to summon the elders of the church; and on their coming reminded them of the manner in which he had conversed among them; how faithfully and affectionately he had discharged the offices of his ministry, and how incessantly he had laboured for the good of the souls of men; adding that he had never failed to acquaint them, both in public and private, with whatever might be useful and profitable to them; urging both the Jews and Gentiles to repentance and reformation of life, and a hearty perseverance in the faith of Christ; that he was now going up to Jerusalem, where he was ignorant of what might befal him, except what had been foretold him by those who were endued with the prophetical gifts of the Holy Ghost; namely, that afflictions and imprisonment would attend him. But that this gave him no concern, being willing to lay down his life whenever the gospel required it, and fully determined to serve faithfully his great Lord and Master: "I well know," said he, "that you will see my face no more; but, for my encouragement and satisfaction, ye yourselves can bear me witness that I have not, by concealing any part of the Christian doctrine, betrayed your souls. And as for yourselves, whom God hath made bishops and pastors of his church, you should be careful to feed, guide, and direct those Christians under your inspection, and be infinitely tender of the welfare of souls, for whose redemption the blessed Jesus laid down his own life. All the care, therefore, possible for you to use, is no more than necessary; for after my departure false teachers will appear in the church, to the great danger of the souls of men, seeking by every crafty method and pernicious doctrine to gain proselytes to their party, and by that means fill the church of Christ with schisms and factions. Watch ye, therefore, and remember with what tears and sorrow I have during three years warned you of these things. And now I recommend you to the Divine favour and protection, and to the rules and instructions of the gospel, which, if adhered to, will undoubtedly dispose and perfect you for that state of happiness which the Almighty hath prepared for good men in the mansions of eternity. You well know that I have from the beginning dealt faithfully and uprightly with you; that I have no covetous designs, or ever desired the riches

of other men; nay, I have laboured with mine own hands to support myself and my companions; you ought, therefore, to support the weak, and relieve the poor, rather than be yourselves chargeable to others, according to that incomparable saying of the great Redeemer of mankind: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." If we minutely attend to the whole of this apostle's preaching and writing, we shall find that he ever strenuously inculcates not only points of faith, but also practical duties, without which our faith is vain.

St. Paul having finished his discourse, he kneeled down, and joined with them in prayer; and they all melted into tears, and, with the greatest expressions of sorrow, attended him to the ship; grieving in the most passionate manner for what he had told them, "that they should see his face no more."

Paul, with his companions, now departed from Miletus, and arrived at Coos, from whence they sailed the next day to Rhodes, a large island in the Ægean sea. Leaving this place, they came to Patara, the metropolis of Lycia, where they went on board another vessel bound for Tyre, in Phœnicia. On his arrival, he visited the brethren there, and continued with them a week, and was advised by some of them who had the gift of prophecy, not to go up to Jerusalem. But the apostle would by no means abandon his design, or refuse to suffer anything, provided he might spread the gospel of his Saviour. Finding all persuasions were in vain, they jointly accompanied him to the shore, where he kneeled down and prayed with them; and after embracing them with the utmost affection, he went on board, and came to Ptolemais, and the next day to Cesarea.

During their stay in this place Agabus, a Christian prophet, came thither from Judea, who taking Paul's girdle, bound his own hands and feet with it, signifying by this symbol that the Jews would bind Paul in that manner and deliver him over to the Gentiles. Whereupon both his own companions and the Christians of Cesarea earnestly besought him that he would not go up to Jerusalem. But the apostle asked them if they intended by these passionate dissuasives to add more affliction to his sorrow? "For I am ready," continued he, "not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus."

When the disciples found that his resolution was not to be shaken, they importuned him no farther, leaving the event to be determined

according to the pleasure of the Most High. And all things being ready, Paul and his companions set forward on their journey, and were kindly and joyfully received by the Christians on their arrival at Jerusalem.

The day after their arrival, Paul and his companions went to the house of St. James the apostle, where the rest of the bishops and governors of the church were met together. After mutual salutations, the apostle gave them a particular account of the success with which God had blessed his endeavours in propagating Christianity among the Gentiles, for which they all joined in thanksgiving to God; but withal told him that he was now come to a place where there were many thousands of Jewish converts, who were all zealous for the law of Moses, and who had been informed that he taught the Jews, whom he had instrumentally converted, to renounce circumcision and the ceremonies of the law. That as soon as the multitude heard of his arrival, they would all assemble, to see how he behaved himself in this matter: and, therefore, to prevent a disturbance, thought it advisable for him to join himself with four persons who were at that time to acomplish a vow, and perform the usual rites and ceremonies with them, and provide such sacrifices for them as the law in that case required. St. Paul, who in such case was willing "to become all things to all men, that he might gain the more," consented unto their counsel; and taking the persons with him to the temple, told the priests that the time of a vow being now expired, and having purified themselves according as the nature of their case required, they were come to make the offerings required by the law.

The seven days in which those sacrifices were to be offered being now almost ended, certain Jews from Asia, finding him in the temple, began to raise a tumult; and laying hold of Paul, called to their brethren the Jews to assist them, declaring that this was the person who everywhere preached doctrines derogatory to the Jewish nation and destructive to the institutions of the law. This accusation, though absolutely false, set the whole city in an uproar; and seizing on the apostle, they dragged him out of the temple, when the doors were immediately shut, to prevent his returning into that holy place.

As they were proceeding in this manner, Paul asked the governor whether he might have the liberty of speaking to him: who finding he understood the Greek language, inquired of him whether he was not

the Egyptian, who, a few years before, had raised a sedition in Judea and headed a party of four thousand vile and profligate wretches? To which the apostle replied that he was a Jew of Tarsus, a freeman of a rich and honourable city; and therefore begged of him that he might have leave to speak to the people. This being readily granted, Paul addressed them in the Hebrew language as follows:—

Listen, ye descendants of Jacob, to a person of your own religion, and, like yourselves, a child of Abraham; born in Tarsus, and brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, and fully instructed in the law delivered by Moses to our forefathers, and formerly as zealous for the temple-worship as ye are at present.

Nay, I persecuted unto death all who believed on Jesus, seizing on all I could find, both men and women, and casting them into prison.

But as I was pursuing my journey to execute this commission, and was arrived near Damascus, there appeared, about mid-day, a light from heaven shining round about me.

Terrified at so awful an appearance, I fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" To which I answered, "Who art thou, Lord?" And the voice replied, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest."

After recovering from the terror with which my mind was filled, I answered "What shall I do, Lord?" And he replied, "Arise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do."

The brilliancy of the glory deprived me of my sight; so that my companions led me by the hand to Damascus, where one Ananias, a person well respected by all the Jews of that city, visited me, and said, "Brother Saul, receive thy sight;" and in a moment my eyes were opened, and I saw him standing before me.

When he saw that my sight was restored, he said unto me, The Almighty God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, hath appointed thee to know his will, to see the great Messiah, the Holy One of God, and hear the voice of his mouth; for thou art chosen to be a witness to all the nations of the earth, of those surprising things thou hast seen and heard. Why, therefore, tarriest thou here any longer? "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

After this glorious vision, and miraculous power of the Most High, when I was returned from Damas-

cus to Jerusalem, and offering up my prayers in the temple, I fell into a trance, and again saw the great Son of David, who said unto me, Depart quickly from Jerusalem; for the sons of Jacob will refuse to believe thy testimony concerning me. And I answered, Lord, they know how cruelly I used thy saints and followers; that I imprisoned and beat them in every city and in every synagogue. Nay, when they shed the blood of thy holy martyr Stephen, I was also one of the spectators; I consented to his death; I even kept the raiment of those that slew him.

But he replied, Depart; I will send thee to countries far remote, even to the Gentiles.

The Jews had till now listened with some attention to his speech; but on his mentioning the commission he had received to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, their fury knew no bounds; crying out with one voice, "Away with such a fellow from the earth!"

But the captain of the guard commanded him to be brought within the castle, and that he should be examined and scourged till he confessed the reason of the uncommon rage shown against him by the people. Accordingly the lictor bound him, and was going to put the orders he had received into execution; when Paul asked the centurion, who stood by, whether it was lawful to scourge a citizen of Rome, before any sentence had been passed upon him? The centurion, instead of answering the question, repaired immediately to the governor, and desired him to take care how he proceeded against the prisoner, because he was a Roman. On this information, the governor came into the prison, and asked Paul whether he was really a free citizen of Rome? and being told he was, answered that he himself procured that great privilege by a large sum of money; but Paul answered, "I was free born." On receiving this account, the governor commanded the centurion not to scourge him, being terrified at what he had already done, namely, his chaining a free denizen of Rome.

The next day he ordered his chains to be taken off; and, that he might thoroughly satisfy himself of the cause of so unusual a tumult on the preceding day, summoned the Sanhedrim to meet, and brought down Paul before them.

The apostle being thus placed before the great council of the Jews, told them, that in all the passages of his life he had taken care to govern his actions by the severest rules of duty and conscience: "Men and brethren," said he, "I have

lived in all good conscience before God until this day."

But however this expression of St. Paul might tend to show the true state of his mind, the high-priest Ananias was so offended at it, that he commanded those who stood next him to strike him in the face; at which the apostle smartly replied, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." On which, some of the spectators replied, "It is not lawful to revile the high-priest of the Almighty." Paul answered, "I did not know that Ananias was appointed by God to be an high-priest: but as he is invested with authority, it is unjust to revile him; God himself having commanded that "no man shall speak evil of the rulers of the people." Paul perceiving that the council consisted partly of Sadducees, and partly of Pharisees, cried aloud, "'Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee,' and am now brought before your tribunal for asserting the resurrection of the dead."

This declaration threw the whole court into confusion, by exciting the regard of the Pharisees, who favoured the doctrine of the resurtion, and incurring the resentment of the Sadducees, who strenuously opposed it.

The dissensions of these sects increased to that degree, that the captain feared Paul would have been pulled to pieces; and therefore took him from the bar, and carried him back to the castle. But, during the silence of the night, he was comforted by extraordinary communications of the Divine Spirit, encouraging him to constancy and resolution, and assuring him that he should, notwithstanding all the malice and wicked designs of his enemies, live to bear testimony even in Rome itself.

The next morning the Jews, whose envy and malice were increased by these dilatory proceedings, determined to use a quicker method of putting a period to his life. In order to this, about forty of the most turbulent entered into a shocking confederacy of killing him; ratifying it by oaths and bitter execrations that they would neither eat nor drink till they had put their inhuman design into execution. Accordingly this design, though probably concluded under the mantle of the night, was discovered to St. Paul by his sister's son, and, at the request of the apostle, told to the governor himself; who immediately commanded two parties of horse and foot to be ready by nine o'clock that night, in order to conduct St. Paul to Felix, the Roman governor of that province; to whom also he sent an account of the whole

proceedings of the Jews against the prisoner, and at the same time ordered his accusers also to appear before the Roman magistrate. Accordingly, St. Paul was conducted to Antipatris, and afterwards to Cesarea, where the letters being delivered to Felix, the apostle was also presented to him; and finding that he belonged to the Province of Cilicia, he told him that as soon as his accusers were come down, he would determine the affair, and in the meantime commanded him to be secured in the place called Herod's Hall.

CHAPTER VI.

The Transactions of St. Paul, from the first Trial before Felix, till his coming to Rome.

OUR apostle, soon after his arrival, encountered Tertullus, who in a short but eloquent speech began to accuse him, charging him with sedition, heresy, and the profanation of the temple.

The orator having finished his charge against the apostle, Felix told St. Paul that he was now at liberty to make his defence; which he did in the following manner:—

I answer this charge of the Jews with the greater satisfaction before thee, because thou hast for many years been a judge of this nation. About twelve days since I repaired to Jerusalem, to worship the God of Jacob. But I neither disputed with any man, nor endeavoured to stir up the people in the synagogues or the city. Nor can they prove the charge they have brought against me.

This, however, I readily confess, "that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers:" and according to this faith I am careful to maintain a clear and quiet conscience both towards God and man.

After I had spent some years in distant countries, I repaired to Jerusalem, with the alms I had collected in other provinces for the poor of mine own nation, and offerings to the God of Jacob. And while I was performing the duties of religion, certain Asiatic Jews found me in the temple, purified according to law; but neither attended with a multitude of followers, nor the least tumultuous assembly. It was, therefore, necessary that the Jews should have been here, if they had anything to allege against me. Nay, I appeal to those of the Sanhedrim here present, if anything has been laid to my charge except the objections of the Sadducees, who violently opposed me for asserting the doctrine of the resurrection.

Felix having thus heard both parties, refused to pass any final sentence till he had more fully advised about it, and consulted Lysias, the governor of the castle, who was the most proper person to give an account of the sedition and tumult; commanding that in the meantime St. Paul should be kept under a guard, but that he should enjoy the liberty of being visited by his friends, and receiving from them any office of friendship.

Soon after this, Felix's wife, Drusilla, a Jewess, and daughter to the elder Herod, came down to him at Cesarea; in whose presence the governor sent for Paul, and gave him leave to explain the doctrines of Christianity. In this discourse the apostle took occasion to insist upon the most important points both of faith and practice, particularly the influence which a future judgment should have upon the whole tenor of his life and conduct.

This discourse was wisely adapted to the state and temper of Felix; though when St. Paul pathetically described the terrors of the last judgment, Felix trembled on his throne, and was so greatly affected that he caused the apostle to break off abruptly, telling him that he would hear the remainder of his discourse at a more convenient season.

Felix, no doubt, had sufficient reason to tremble, and his conscience to be sensibly alarmed at these reflections; for he was a man notoriously infamous for rapine and violence. Tacitus tells us that he made his will the law of his government, practising all manner of cruelty and injustice. To these qualities he added bribery and covetousness; and therefore often sent for our apostle to discourse with him, expecting he would have given him a considerable sum for his release; having, in all probability, heard that St. Paul had brought a large quantity of money to Jerusalem.

But finding no offers were made him, either by the apostle or his friends, he kept him prisoner two years; when he himself being discharged from his office by Nero, he left Paul in prison, in order to gratify the malice of the Jews, and engage them to speak the better of his government after his departure from Judea.

Felix was succeeded in the government of the province by Porcius Festus, before whom at his first coming to Jerusalem the high-priest and Sanhedrim preferred an indictment against Paul, desiring that he might be sent up to Jerusalem, in order to take his trial; intending to assassinate him by the way. But Festus told them, that

he was shortly going himself to Cesarea, and that if they had any complaint against Paul, they should come down thither and accuse him.

Accordingly, as soon as he was come to Cesarea, he ascended the tribunal, where the Jews renewed the charge they had before brought against Paul; but the apostle soon cleared himself of every part of the charge, they not being able to prove anything against him. Festus, however, being willing to procure the favour of the Jews at his entrance on the government, asked Paul whether he would go up and be tried before him at Jerusalem? But the apostle, well knowing the consequences of such a proposal, answered, as a Roman, "I appeal unto Cæsar."

This method of appealing was common among the Romans, and introduced to defend and secure the lives and fortunes of the people from the unjust encroachments and rigorous severities of the magistrates, whereby it was lawful, in cases of oppression, to appeal to the people for redress; a thing more than once settled by the sanction of the Valerian law.

Some time after St. Paul had appealed unto Cæsar, king Agrippa, who succeeded Herod in the tetrarchate of Galilee, and his sister Bernice, came to Cesarea to visit the new governor. Festus embraced this opportunity of mentioning the case of our apostle to king Agrippa, together with the remarkable tumult this affair had occasioned among the Jews, and the appeal he had made to Cæsar. This account excited the curiosity of king Agrippa, and he was desirous of hearing himself what St. Paul had to say in his own vindication.

Accordingly, the next day, the king and his sister, accompanied with Festus the governor, and several other persons of distinction, came into the court, with a pompous and splendid retinue, where the prisoner was brought before them. On his appearing, Festus informed the court how greatly he had been importuned by the Jews, both at Cesarea and Jerusalem, to put the prisoner to death as a malefactor; but having, on examination, found him guilty of no capital crime, and the prisoner himself having appealed unto Cæsar, he was determined to send him to Rome; but was willing to have his cause debated before Agrippa, that he might be furnished with some material particulars to send with him; it being absurd to send a prisoner without signifying the crimes alleged against him.

Festus having finished his speech, Agrippa told Paul he was now at

liberty to make his own defence; and silence being made, he delivered himself in the following manner, addressing his speech particularly to Agrippa:—

I consider it as a peculiar happiness, king Agrippa, that I am to make my defence against the accusations of the Jews, before thee; because thou art well acquainted with all their customs, and the questions commonly debated among them; I therefore beseech thee to hear me patiently. All the Jews are well acquainted with my manner of life from my youth, the greatest part of it having been spent with my own countrymen at Jerusalem. They also know that I was educated under the institutions of the Pharisees, the strictest sect of our religion, and am now arraigned for a tenet believed by all their fathers; a tenet sufficiently credible in itself, and plainly revealed in the Scriptures; I mean the resurrection of the dead. Why should any mortal think it incredible or impossible that God should raise the dead?

I, indeed, formerly thought myself indispensably obliged to oppose the religion of Jesus of Nazareth. Nor was I satisfied with imprisoning, and punishing with death itself, the saints I found at Jerusalem; I even persecuted them in strange cities, whither my implacable zeal pursued them, having procured authority for that purpose from the chief priests and the elders.

Accordingly, I departed for Damascus with a commission from the Sanhedrim; but as I was travelling towards that city, I saw at mid-day, O king, a light from heaven, far exceeding the brightness of the sun, encompassing me and my companions. On seeing this awful appearance, we all fell to the earth; and I heard a voice, which said to me, in the Hebrew language, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." To which I answered, "Who art thou, Lord?" And he replied, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." But be not terrified, arise from the earth; for I have appeared unto thee, that thou mightest be both a witness of the things thou hast seen, and also of others which I will hereafter reveal unto thee. My power shall deliver thee from the Jews and Gentiles, to whom now I send thee to preach the gospel; to withdraw the veil of darkness and ignorance, to turn them from falsehood unto truth, "and from the power of Satan unto God."

Accordingly, king Agrippa, I readily obeyed the heavenly vision: I preached the gospel first to the

inhabitants of Damascus, then to those of Jerusalem and Judea, and afterwards to the Gentiles; persuading them to forsake their iniquities, and, by sincere repentance, turn to the living God.

These endeavours to save the souls of sinful mortals exasperated the Jews, who caught me in the temple, and entered into a conspiracy to destroy me. But, by the help of Almighty God, I still remain a witness to all the human race, preaching nothing but what Moses and all the prophets foretold, namely, that the Messiah should suffer, be the first that should rise from the chambers of the grave, and publish the glad tidings of salvation both to the Jews and Gentiles.

While the apostle thus pleaded for himself, Festus cried out, "Paul, thou art mad; too much study hath deprived thee of thy reason." But Paul answered:—I am far, most noble Festus, from being transported with idle and distracted ideas; the words I speak are dictated by truth and sobriety: and I am persuaded that king Agrippa himself is not ignorant of these things; for they were transacted openly before the world. I am confident, king Agrippa, that thou believest the prophets; and therefore must know that all their predictions were fulfilled in Christ. To which Agrippa answered, "Thou hast almost persuaded me to embrace the Christian faith." Paul replied, "I sincerely wish that not only thou, but also all that hear me, were not almost, but altogether the same as I myself, except being prisoners."

It being now finally determined that Paul should be sent to Rome, he was, with several other prisoners of consequence, committed to the care of Julius, commander of a company belonging to the legion of Augustus; and was accompanied in his voyage by St. Luke, Aristarchus, Trophimus, and some others not mentioned by the sacred historian.

In the month of September they embarked on board a ship at Adramyttium, and sailed to Sidon, where the centurion courteously gave the apostle leave to go on shore, to visit his friends and refresh himself.

After a short stay they sailed for Cyprus, and arrived opposite the Fair-Havens, a place near Myra, a city of Lycia. Here, the season being far advanced, and Paul foreseeing it would be a dangerous voyage, persuaded him to put in and winter there. But the Roman centurion preferring the opinion of the master of the ship, and the harbour being at the same time incommodious, resolved, if possible, to reach Phenice, a port of Crete, and winter there. But they soon found them-

selves disappointed; for the fine southerly gale which had favoured them for some time, suddenly changed into a stormy and tempestuous wind at north-east; which blew with such violence that the ship was obliged to sail before it; and, to prevent her sinking, they threw overboard the principal part of her lading.

In this desperate and uncomfortable condition they continued fourteen days, and on the fourteenth night the mariners discovered they were near some coast; and therefore, to avoid the rocks, thought proper to come to an anchor, till the morning might give them better information.

During the time they continued at anchor, waiting for the light of the morning, St. Paul prevailed upon them to eat and refresh themselves, having fasted a long time, assuring them they should all escape.

The country near which they were was, as St. Paul had foretold, an island called Melita, now Malta, situated in the Libyan Sea, between Syracuse and Africa. Here they landed, and met with great civility from the people, who treated them with humanity, and entertained them with every necessary accommodation. But whilst St. Paul was laying a few sticks on the fire, a viper, enlivened by the heat, came from among the wood and fastened on his hand. On seeing this, the inhabitants of the island concluded that he was certainly some notorious murderer, whom the divine vengeance, though it suffered him to escape the sea, had reserved for a more public and solemn execution. But when they saw him shake off the venomous creature into the fire, and no manner of harm ensue, they changed their sentiments, and cried out "that he was a god."

After three months' stay in this island, the centurion, with his charge, went on board the Castor and Pollux, a ship of Alexandria, bound to Italy. They put in at Syracuse, where they tarried three days; they then sailed to Rhegium, and thence to Puteoli, where they landed; and finding some Christians there, staid at their request a week with them, and then set forward on their journey to Rome. The Christians of this city hearing of the apostle's coming, went to meet him as far as the distance of about thirty miles from Rome, and others as far as the Appii-forum, fifty-one miles distant from the capital. They kindly embraced each other; and the liberty he saw the Christians enjoy at Rome greatly tended to enliven the spirits of the apostle.

CHAPTER VII.

The Transactions of St. Paul, from his Arrival at Rome till his Martyrdom.

HAVING refreshed himself after the fatigue of his voyage, the apostle sent for the heads of the Jewish consistory at Rome, and related to them the cause of his coming, in the following manner:—Though I have been guilty of no violation of the laws of our religion, yet I was delivered by the Jews at Jerusalem to the Roman governors, who more than once would have acquitted me, as innocent of any capital offence; but by the perverseness of my persecutors I was obliged to appeal to Cæsar; not that I had anything to accuse my nation of; I had recourse to this method merely to clear my own innocency.

Having thus removed a popular prejudice, he added, That the true cause of his sufferings was what their own religion had taught him, "the belief and expectation of a future resurrection." But his discourse had different effects on different hearers, some being convinced, and others persisting in their infidelity.

For two whole years Paul dwelt at Rome, in a house he had hired for his own use; wherein he assiduously employed himself in preaching and writing for the good of the church.

Among others of the apostle's converts at Rome was one Onesimus, who had formerly been a servant to Philemon, a person of distinction at Colosse, but had run away from his master, and fraudulently taken with him some things of value.

Having rambled as far as Rome, he was now converted by the instrumentality of St. Paul, who advised him to return to his master, and gave him a short recommendatory letter, "earnestly desiring his master to pardon him, and, notwithstanding his former faults, to treat him kindly, and use him as a brother; promising withal, that if he had wronged or owed him anything he himself would repay it."

This epistle may be considered as a masterpiece of eloquence in the persuasive way; for in it the apostle had recourse to all the considerations which friendship, religion, piety, and tenderness, can inspire, to reconcile an incensed master to his servant.

The Christians of Philippi hearing of St. Paul being at Rome, and not knowing what distress he might be reduced to, raised a contribution for him, and sent it by Epaphroditus, their bishop; by whom he returned an epistle to them, wherein he gives some account of the state of his affairs at Rome, gratefully

acknowledges their kindness to him, warns them against the dangerous opinions which the Judaizing teachers began to propagate among them, and advises them to live in continual obedience to Christ; to avoid disputations, delight in prayer, be courageous under affliction, united in love, and clothed with humility, in imitation of the blessed Jesus, who so far humbled himself as to "become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

St. Paul lived about three years at Ephesus, preaching the gospel to the numerous inhabitants of that city, and was therefore well acquainted with the state and condition of the place: so that taking the opportunity of Tychicus' going thither, he wrote his epistle to the Ephesians; wherein he endeavours to countermine the principles and practices both of the Jews and Gentiles, to confirm them in the belief and practice of the Christian doctrine, and to instruct them fully in the great mysteries of the gospel; their redemption and justification by the death of Christ; their gratuitous election; their union with the Jews in one body, of which Christ is the head; and the glorious exaltation of that head above all creatures, both spiritual and temporal: together with many excellent precepts, both as to the general duties of religion and the duties of their particular relations.

St. Paul himself had never been at Colosse: Epaphras, who was then at Rome, had preached the gospel there with good success: and from him he might learn that certain false teachers had endeavoured to persuade the people that they ought not to apply to God by Jesus Christ, who, since his ascension, was so far exalted above them that angels were now become the proper mediators between God and man; and therefore, in opposition to this, as well as other seducing doctrines of the same nature, he wrote his epistle to the Colossians; wherein he magnificently displays the Messiah, and all the benefits flowing from him, as being the image of his Father, the Redeemer of all mankind, the Reconciler of all things to God, and the Head of the Church, who gives life and vigour to all its members.

By what means St. Paul was discharged from the accusation which the Jews had brought against him, we have no account in history; but it is natural to suppose that not having sufficient proof of what they alleged, or being informed that the crimes they had accused him of were no violation of the Roman laws, they durst not accuse him before the emperor, and so permit-

ted him to be discharged of course. But by whatever means he procured his liberty, it is thought he wrote his epistle to the Hebrews before he left Italy, from whence he dates his salutations.

The principal design of it is to magnify Christ and the religion of the gospel above Moses and the Jewish economy, in order to establish and confirm the converted Jews in the firm belief and profession of Christianity, notwithstanding the troubles and persecutions that would certainly attend them.

Having thus discharged his ministry, both by preaching and writing, in Italy, St. Paul, accompanied by Timothy, prosecuted his long intended journey into Spain; and, according to the testimony of several writers, crossed the sea, and preached the gospel in Britain; though by others this matter is very much doubted.

What success he had in these western parts is not known; he, however, continued there eight or nine months, and then returned again to the east, visited Sicily, Greece, and Crete, and then repaired to Rome.

Here he met with Peter, and was, together with him, thrown into prison, doubtless in the general persecution raised against the Christians, under pretence that they had set fire to the city. How long he remained in prison is uncertain; nor do we know whether he was scourged before his execution. He was, however, allowed the privilege of a Roman citizen, and therefore beheaded.

Being come to the place of execution, which was the Salvian waters, three miles from Rome, he cheerfully, after a solemn preparation, gave his neck to the fatal stroke; and from this vale of misery passed to the blissful regions of immortality, to the kingdom of his beloved Master, the great Redeemer of the human race.

St. Clement, the contemporary of St. Paul, speaks of that apostle in the following terms, in his first epistle to the Corinthians: "By means of jealousy, Paul has received the prize of Perseverance. Having been seven times in bonds; having been evil entreated and stoned; having preached in the east and in the west; he has obtained the glorious prize of his faith. After having instructed all the world in righteousness, coming into the west he has suffered martyrdom under those who command; and thus quitting the world, after having shown in it a great example of patience, he is gone into the holy place."

He was buried in the Via Ostiensis, about two miles from Rome:

and about the year 317 Constantine the Great, at the instance of pope Silvester, built a stately church over his grave, adorned it with a hundred marble columns, and beautified it with the most exquisite workmanship.

St. Paul seems to have been eminently fitted for the apostleship of the Gentiles, to contend with and confute the grave and the wise, the acute and the subtle, the sage and the learned, of the heathen world, and to wound them with arrows from their own quiver. He seldom, indeed, made use of learning and philosophy; it being more agreeable to the design of the gospel to confound the wisdom and learning of the world by the plain doctrine of the cross.

He was humble to the lowest step of debasement and condescension, no one ever thinking better of others, or more meanly of himself. And though, when he had to deal with envious and malicious adversaries, who endeavoured by vilifying his person to obstruct his ministry, he knew how to magnify his office, and to let them know that he was not inferior to the chiefest of the apostles; yet at other times he always declared to the world that he considered himself "the least of the apostles, not meet to be called an apostle;" and, as if this were not enough, he formed a word on purpose to express his humility, and styled himself "less than the least of the saints," nay, "the very chief of sinners."

His abstinence and sobriety were remarkable; for he often abridged himself of the conveniency of lawful and necessary accommodations.

What he taught to others, he practised himself; his "conversation was in heaven," and his "desires were to depart, and to be with Christ;" and hence it is very probable that he always led a single life, though some of the ancients rank him among the married apostles.

His kindness and charity were remarkable; he had a compassionate tenderness for the poor, and a quick sense of the wants of others. To what church soever he came, it was always one of his first cares to make provision for the poor, and to stir up the bounty of the rich and wealthy; nay, he worked often with his own hands, not only to maintain himself, but also to help and relieve the poor. But his charity to the souls of men was infinitely greater, fearing no dangers, refusing no labours, going through good and evil report, that he might gain men over to the knowledge of the truth, and bring them out of the crooked paths, and place them in the straight way that leadeth to life eternal.

Nor was his charity to men greater than his zeal to God, labouring with all his might to promote the honour of his divine Master. When at Athens, he saw them involved in the grossest superstition and idolatry, and giving the honour that was due to God alone, to statues and images; this fired his zeal, and he could not but let them know the resentment of his mind, and how greatly they dishonoured God, the great maker and preserver of the world. Nor, in the course of a most extensive ministry, was he tired either with the dangers and difficulties he met with, or the troubles and oppositions that were raised against him.

This will easily appear, if we take a survey of what trials and sufferings he underwent, some parts of which are thus briefly summed up by himself: "In labours abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons frequent, in deaths oft; thrice beaten with rods, once stoned, thrice suffered shipwreck, a night and a day in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils by his countrymen, in perils by the heathens, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness; and besides those things that were without, that which daily came upon him, the care of all the churches." An account, though very great, yet far short of what he endured. He did not want solicitations, both from Jews and Gentiles; and might, doubtless, in some measure, have made his own terms, would he have been false to his trust, and quitted that way which they so violently opposed.

But those things weighed very little with our apostle, who "counted not his life dear unto him, so that he might finish his course with joy and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus." And therefore when he thought himself under the sentence of death could triumphantly say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." In short, he was a man in whom the grace of God was displayed with a peculiar lustre, and who gave the most convincing proofs that the influence of the gospel principles exceeds all moral and legal obligations.

SAINT ANDREW.

CHAPTER I.

The transactions of St. Andrew from his Birth to his being called to the Apostleship.

THIS apostle was born at Bethsaida, a city of Galilee, built on the banks of the lake of Gennesaret, and was son to John, or Jonas, a fisherman of that town. He was brother to Simon Peter, but whether older or younger is not certainly known, though the generality of the ancients intimate that he was the younger. He was brought up to his father's trade, at which he laboured till our blessed Saviour called him to be a "fisher of men," for which he was, by some preparatory instructions, qualified even before the appearance of the Messiah.

John the Baptist had lately preached the doctrine of repentance; and was, by the generality of the Jews, from the impartiality of his precepts, and the remarkable strictness and austerity of his life, held in great veneration.

In the number of his followers was our apostle, who accompanied him beyond Jordan when the Messiah, who had some time before been baptized, came that way. Upon his approach, the Baptist pointed him out as the Messiah, styling him the Lamb of God, the true sacrifice that was to expiate the sins of the world. As soon as the Baptist had given this character of Jesus, Andrew and another disciple, probably St. John, followed the Saviour of mankind to the place of his abode.

After some conversation with him, Andrew departed, and having found his brother Simon, informed him that he had discovered the great Messiah, so long expected by the house of Jacob; and accordingly brought him to Jesus. They did not, however, stay long with their Master, but returned to their calling.

Something more than a year after, Jesus, passing through Galilee, found Andrew and Peter fishing on the sea of Galilee; where he fully satisfied them of the greatness and divinity of his person, by a miraculous draught of fish which they took at his command. He now told them that they should enter on a different series of labours, and instead of fish should, by the efficacy and influence of their doctrine upon the heart and conscience, catch men; command-

ing them to follow him, as his immediate disciples and attendants: and accordingly they left all, and followed him.

CHAPTER II.

The transactions of St. Andrew, from our blessed Saviour's Ascension, till his martyrdom.

AFTER the ascension of the blessed Jesus into heaven, and the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, to qualify them for their great undertaking, St. Andrew, according to the generality of ancient writers, was chosen to preach the gospel in Scythia, and the neighbouring countries.

Accordingly he departed from Jerusalem, and first travelled through Cappadocia, Galatia, and Bithynia, instructing the inhabitants in the faith of Christ, and continued his journey along the Euxine Sea into the deserts of Scythia. An ancient author tells us that he first came to Amyntus, where, being entertained by a Jew, he went into the synagogue, preached to them concerning Jesus, and, from the prophecies of the Old Testament, proved him to be the Messiah and Saviour of the world. Having converted many here, he settled the times for their public meetings, and ordained them priests.

He next went to Trapezium, a maritime city on the Euxine Sea; whence, after visiting many other places, he came to Nice, where he stayed two years, preaching and working miracles with great success. After leaving Nice he passed to Nicomedia, and thence to Chalcedon, whence he sailed through the Propontis afterwards to Amastris. In all these places he met with the greatest difficulties, but overcame them by an invincible patience and resolution.

He next came to Synope, a city situated on the same sea, and famous both for the birth and burial of king Mithridates; here he met with his brother Peter, and stayed with him a considerable time. The inhabitants of Synope were mostly Jews, who, partly from a zeal for their religion, and partly from their barbarous manners, were exasperated against St. Andrew, and entered into a confederacy to burn the house in which he lodged. But being disappointed in their design, they treated him with the most savage cruelty, throwing him on the ground, stamping upon him with their feet, pulling and dragging him from place to place; some beating him with clubs, some pelting him with stones, and others, to satisfy their brutal revenge, biting off the flesh with their teeth, till apprehending

they had entirely deprived him of life, they cast him out into the fields. But he miraculously recovered, and returned publicly into the city; by which, and other miracles he wrought among them, many were converted from the error of their ways, and induced to become disciples of the blessed Jesus.

Departing from Synope, he returned to Jerusalem; but he did not continue long in that neighbourhood. He returned again to the province alloted him for the exercise of his ministry, which greatly flourished, through the power of the divine grace that attended it.

He travelled over Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, Achaia, and Epirus, preaching the gospel, propagating Christianity, and then confirming the doctrine he taught with signs and miracles. At last he came to Petrea, a city of Achaia, where he gave his last and greatest testimony to the gospel of his divine Master, sealing it with his blood.

Ægenus, proconsul of Achaia, came at this time to Petrea, where, observing that multitudes had abandoned the heathen religion, and embraced the gospel of Christ, he had recourse to every method, both of favour and cruelty, to reduce the people to their old idolatry. The apostle, whom no difficulties or dangers could deter from performing the duties of his ministry, addressed himself to the proconsul, calmly putting him in mind that, being only a judge of men, he ought to revere him who was the supreme and impartial Judge of all, pay him the divine honours due to his exalted majesty, and abandon the impieties of his idolatrous worship; observing to him, that if he would renounce his idolatries, and heartily embrace the Christian faith, he should, with him and the members who had believed in the Son of God, receive eternal happiness in the Messiah's kingdom. The proconsul answered, that he himself should never embrace the religion he mentioned; and that the only reason why he was so earnest with him to sacrifice to the gods was, that those whom he had everywhere seduced might by his example be brought back to the ancient religion they had forsaken. The apostle replied, that he saw it was in vain to endeavour to persuade a person incapable of sober counsels, and hardened in his own blindness and folly; that with regard to himself, he might act as he pleased, and if he had any torment greater than another, he might heap that upon him; as the greater constancy he showed in his sufferings for Christ, the more acceptable he should be to his Lord and Master. Ægenus could hold no longer, and

after treating him with very opprobrious language, and showing him the most distinguished marks of contempt, he passed sentence on him that he should be put to death.

He first ordered the apostle to be scourged, and seven lictors successively whipped his naked body; but seeing his invincible patience and constancy, he commanded him to be crucified; but to be fastened to the cross with cords instead of nails, that his death might be more lingering and tedious.

As he was led to the place of execution, walking with a cheerful and composed mind, the people cried out, that a good and innocent man was unjustly condemned to die. On his coming near the cross, he saluted it in the following manner: "I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging on it, and adorned with his members as with so many inestimable jewels. I therefore come joyfully and triumphing to it, that it may receive me as a disciple and follower of him who once hung upon it, and be the means of carrying me safe to my Master, being the instrument on which he redeemed me."

After offering up his prayers to the throne of grace, and exhorting the people to constancy and perseverance in the faith he had delivered to them, he was fastened to the cross, on which he hung two whole days, teaching and instructing the people in the best manner his wretched situation would admit, being sometimes so weak and faint as scarce to have the power of utterance.

In the meantime great interest was made to the proconsul to spare his life; but the apostle earnestly begged of the Almighty that he might now depart, and seal the truth of his religion with his blood. His prayers were heard, and he expired, it is said, on the last day of November, but in what year is uncertain.

There seems to have been something peculiar in the form of the cross on which he suffered. It was commonly thought to have been a cross decussate, or two pieces of timber crossing each other in the centre in the form of the letter X, and hence usually known by the name of St. Andrew's cross.

His body being taken down from the cross, was decently and honourably enterred by Maximilia, a lady of great quality and estate, and who, Nicephorus tells us, was wife to the proconsul.

Constantine the Great afterwards removed his body to Constantinople,

and buried it in the great church he had built to the honour of the apostles; but this structure being taken down some hundred years after, in order to rebuild it, by Justinian the emperor, the body of St. Andrew was found in a wooden coffin, and again deposited in its proper place.

SAINT JAMES THE GREAT.

CHAPTER I.

The Transactions of St. James the Great, from his Birth to the Ascension of the Son of God.

THIS apostle (who was surnamed the Great, by way of distinction from another of that name) was the son of Zebedee, and by trade a fisherman, to which he applied himself with remarkable assiduity, and was exercising his employment when the Saviour of the world passing by the sea of Galilee saw him, with his brother, in the ship, and called them both to be his disciples. Nor was the call in vain: they cheerfully complied with it, and immediately left all to follow him; readily delivering themselves up to perform whatever service he should appoint them.

Soon after this, he was called from the station of an ordinary disciple to the apostolical office, and even honoured with some particular favours beyond most of the apostles, being one of the three whom our Lord made choice of as his companions in the more intimate transactions of his life, from which the rest were excluded. Thus, with Peter and his brother John, he attended his Master when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead; he was admitted to Christ's glorius transfiguration on the mount; and when the holy Jesus was to undergo his bitter agonies in the garden, as preparatory sufferings to his passion, James was one of the three taken to be a spectator of them.

Nor was it the least instance of that particular honour our Lord conferred on these apostles, that at his calling them to the apostleship, he gave them a new name and title. Simon, he called Peter, or a Rock; and James and John who were brothers, Boanerges, or The sons of thunder.

Some think that this name was

given them on account of their loud and bold preaching of the gospel to the world, fearing no threatenings, despising all opposition, and going on thundering in the ears of a drowsy and sleepy world; rousing and awakening the consciences of men with the earnestness and vehemence of their preaching, which resembled thunder, as the voice of God powerfully shakes the natural world and breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. Others think it relates to the doctrine they delivered, teaching the great mysteries and promulgating the gospel in a more profound and lofty strain than the rest.

But however this be, our blessed Saviour, doubtless, alluded by this term to the naturally furious and resolute disposition of these two brothers, who seem to have been of a more fiery temper than the rest of the apostles, of which we have this memorable instance: when our Lord was determined on his journey to Jerusalem, he sent some of his disciples before him to make preparations for his coming; but on their entering a village of Samaria, they were rudely rejected, from the old grudge that subsisted between the Samaritans and Jews, and because the Saviour, by going up to Jerusalem, seemed to slight their place of worship on mount Gerizim. This piece of rudeness and inhumanity was so highly resented by St. James and his brother, that they came to Jesus, desiring to know if he would not imitate Elias, by calling down fire from heaven to consume this barbarous, inhospitable people? Thus we perceive that the apostles were but men, and that corrupt nature may sometimes appear even in renewed minds. But the holy Jesus soon convinced them of their mistake, by telling them, that instead of destroying, he was come to save, the lives of the children of men.

CHAPTER II.

The transactions of St. James, from the Messiah's Ascension to his sealing the truth of the Gospel with his blood.

SOPHRONIUS tells us, that after the Ascension of the blessed Jesus, this apostle preached to the dispersed Jews; that is, to those converts who dispersed after the death of Stephen. The Spanish writers will have it, that after preaching the gospel in several parts of Judea and Samaria, he visited Spain, where he planted Christianity, and appointed some select disciples to perfect what he had begun; but if we consider the shortness of St. James' life, and

that the apostles continued in a body at Jerusalem even after the dispersion of the other Christians, we shall find it difficult to allow time sufficient for so tedious and difficult a a voyage as that was in those early ages; and therefore it is safest to confine his ministry to Judea and the adjacent countries.

Herod, who was a bigot to the Jewish religion, as well as desirous of acquiring the favour of the Jews, began a violent persecution of the Christians, and his zeal against them animated him to pass sentence of death on St. James immediately. As he was led to the place of executon, the officer that guarded him to the tribunal, or rather his accuser, having been converted by that remarkable courage and constancy shown by the apostle at the time of his trial, repented of what he had done, came and fell down at the apostle's feet, and heartily begged pardon for what he had said against him. The holy man, after recovering from the surprise, tenderly embraced him. "Peace," said he, "my son, peace be unto thee, and pardon of thy faults." Upon which the officer publicly declared himself a Christian, and both were beheaded at the same time. Thus fell the great apostle St. James, taking cheerfully that cup of which he had long before told his Lord he was ready to drink.

SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

CHAPTER I.

The Transactions of St. John, from his Birth to the Ascension of his great Lord and Master.

FROM the very minute and circumstantial account this evangelist gives of John the Baptist, he is supposed to have been one of his followers, and is thought to be that other disciple who, in the first chapter of his Gospel, is said to have been present with Andrew, when John declared Jesus to be "the Lamb of God," and thereupon to have followed him to the place of his abode.

He was by much the youngest of the apostles, yet he was admitted into as great a share of his Master's confidence as any of them. He was one of those to whom he com-



Death of John the Baptist.

municated the most private transactions of his life; one of those whom he took with him when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead; one of those to whom he displayed a specimen of his divinity, in his transfiguration on the mount; one of those who were present at his conference with Moses and Elias, and heard that voice which declared him "the beloved Son of God;" and one of those who were companions in his solitude, most retired devotions, and bitter agonies in the garden.

These instances of particular favour our apostle endeavoured in some measure to answer by returns of particular kindness and constancy. For though he at first deserted his Master on his apprehension, yet he soon recovered himself, and came back to see his Saviour, confidently entered the high-priest's hall, followed our Lord through the several particulars of his trial, and at last waited on him at his execution, owning him, as well as being owned by him, in the midst of armed soldiers, and in the thickest crowds of his most inveterate enemies. Here it was that our great Redeemer committed to his care his sorrowful and disconsolate mother, with his dying breath. And certainly the holy Jesus could not have given a more honourable testimony of his particular respect and kindness to St. John, than by leaving his own mother to his trust and care, and substituting him to supply that duty himself paid her while he resided in this vale of sorrow.

CHAPTER II.

The transactions of St. John from the Ascension of Christ to his death.

AFTER the ascension of the Saviour of the world, when the apostles made a division of the provinces among themselves, that of Asia fell to the share of St. John, though he did not immediately enter upon his charge, but continued at Jerusalem till the death of the blessed Virgin, which might be about fifteen years after our Lord's ascension. Being released from the trust committed to his care by his dying Master, he retired into Asia, and industriously applied himself to the propagation of Christianity, preaching where the gospel had not yet been known, and confirming it where it was already planted. Many churches of note and eminence were founded by him, particularly those of Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and others; but his chief place of residence was at Ephesus, where St. Paul had many years before founded

a church, and constituted Timothy the bishop of it.

After spending several years at Ephesus, he was accused to Domitian, who had begun a persecution against the Christians, as an eminent asserter of atheism and impiety, and a public subverter of the religion of the empire; so that by his command the proconsul sent him bound to Rome, where he met with the treatment that might have been expected from so barbarous a prince, being thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. But the Almighty, who reserved him for farther service in the vineyard of his Son, restrained the heat, as he did in the fiery furnace of old, and delivered him from this seemingly unavoidable destruction. And surely one would have thought that so miraculous a deliverance should have been sufficient to have persuaded any rational man that the religion he taught was from God, and that he was protected from danger by the hand of Omnipotence. But miracles themselves were not sufficient to convince this cruel emperor, or abate his fury. He ordered St. John to be transported to an almost desolate island in the Archipelago, called Patmos, where he continued several years, instructing the poor inhabitants in the knowledge of the Christian faith; and here, about the end of Domitian's reign, he wrote his book of Revelation, exhibiting by visions and prophetical representations the state and condition of Christianity in the future periods and ages of the church.

Upon the death of Domitian, and the succession of Nerva, who repealed all the odious acts of his predecessor, and by public edicts recalled those whom the fury of Domitian had banished, St. John returned to Asia, and fixed his seat again at Ephesus; the rather because the people of that city had lately martyred Timothy the bishop. Here, with the assistance of seven other bishops, he took upon himself the government of the large diocese of Asia Minor, and disposed of the clergy in the best manner that the circumstances of those times would permit; spending his time in an indefatigable execution of his charge; travelling from east to west, to instruct the world in the principles of the holy religion he was sent to propagate.

In this manner St. John continued to labour in the vineyard of his great Master, until death put a period to all his toils and sufferings; which happened in the beginning of Trajan's reign, in the ninety-eighth year of his age; and, according to Eusebius, his remains were buried near Ephesus.

St. John seems always to have led a single life; though some of the ancients tell us he was a married man. He was polished by no study or arts of learning; but what was wanting from human art was abundantly supplied by the excellent faculties of his mind, and that fulness of divine grace with which he was adorned. His humility was admirable, studiously concealing his own honour. For in his epistles he never styles himself either apostle or evangelist; the title of presbyter, or elder, is all he assumes, and probably in regard to his age as much as his office. In his Gospel, when he speaks of "the disciple whom Jesus loved," he constantly conceals his own name, leaving the reader to discover whom he meant. Love and charity he practised himself, and affectionately pressed them upon others: the great love of his Saviour towards him seems to have inspired his soul with a large and more generous charity than the rest. This is the great vein that runs through all his writings, especially his epistles, where he urges it as the great and peculiar law of Christianity, and without which all other pretences to the religion of the holy Jesus are vain and frivolous, useless and insignificant. And this was his constant practice to the very hour of his dissolution; for when age and the decays of nature had rendered him so weak that he was unable to preach to the people any longer, tradition says he was constantly led at every public meeting to the church of Ephesus, and always repeated to them the same precept, "Little children, love one another." And when his hearers, wearied with the constant repetition of the same thing, asked him why he never varied his discourse, he answered, Because to love one another was the command of our blessed Saviour, and, consequently, one grand guide of our conduct through life.

The greatest instance of our apostle's care for the souls of men, is in the writings he left to posterity; the first of which in time, though placed last in the sacred canon, is his Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation, which he wrote during his banishment at Patmos.

Next to the Apocalypse, in order of time, are his three epistles; the first of which is catholic, calculated for all times and places, containing the most excellent rules for the conduct of a Christian life, pressing to holiness and pureness of manners, and not to be satisfied with a naked and empty profession of religion; not to be led away with the crafty insinuation of seducers, and cautioning men against the poisonous principles and practices of the

Gnostics. The apostle here, according to his usual modesty, conceals his name; it being of more consequence to a wise man what is said, than he who says it. It appears from St. Augustine, that this epistle was anciently inscribed to the Parthians, because in all probability St. John preached the gospel in Parthia. The other two epistles are but short, and directed to particular persons; the one to a lady of great quality, the other to the charitable and hospitable Gaius, the kindest friend and most courteous entertainer of all indigent Christians.

Before he undertook the task of writing the Gospel, he caused a general fast to be kept by all the Asiatic churches, to implore the blessing of Heaven on so great and momentous an undertaking. When this was done he set about the work, and completed it in so excellent and sublime a manner that the ancients generally compared him to an eagle soaring aloft among the clouds, whither the weak eye of man was not able to follow him. "Among all the evangelical writers (says St. Basil) none is like St. John, the son of thunder, for the sublimity of his speech, and the height of his discourses, which are beyond any man's capacity fully to reach and comprehend." "St. John, as a true son of thunder (says Epiphanius), by a loftiness of speech peculiar to himself, acquaints us, as it were out of the clouds and dark recesses of wisdom, with the divine doctrine of the Son of God."

Such is the character given of the writings of this great apostle and evangelist, who was honoured with the endearing title of being the beloved disciple of the Son of God; a writer so profound as to deserve by way of eminence, the character of "St. John the divine."

SAINT PHILIP.

CHAPTER I.

The transactions of St. Philip from his birth to the time of his being called to the Apostleship.

THIS apostle was a native of Bethsaida, "the city of Andrew and Peter." He had the honour of being first called to be a disciple of the great Messiah, which happened in the following manner: Our blessed Saviour, soon after his return from the wilderness, where he had been tempted by the devil, met with Andrew and his brother Peter, and after some discourse parted from them. The next day, as he was passing through Galilee, he found Philip, whom he presently commanded to follow him, the constant form he made use of in calling his disciples, and those that inseparably attended him. So that the prerogative of being first called evidently belongs to St. Philip, he being the first of our Lord's disciples; for though Andrew and Peter were the first that came and conversed with the Saviour of the world, yet they immediately returned to their occupation, and were not called till a whole year after.

It cannot be doubted, that notwithstanding St. Philip was a native of Galilee, yet he was excellently skilled in the law and the prophets. Metaphrastes assures us that he had from his childhood been excellently educated; that he frequently read over the books of Moses, and attentively considered the prophecies relating to the Messiah.

Nor was our apostle idle after the honour he had received of being called to attend the Saviour of the world; he immediately imparted the glad tidings of the Messiah's appearance to his brother Nathanael, and conducted him to him.

After being called to the apostleship, we have very little recorded of him by the evangelists. It was, however, to him that our Saviour proposed the question where they should find bread sufficient to satisfy the hunger of so great a multitude? Philip answered, that it was not easy to procure so great a quantity; not considering that it was equally easy for almighty power to feed double the number, when it should be his divine will. It was also to the same apostle that the Gentile proselytes, who came up to worship

at Jerusalem, applied when they were desirous to see the Saviour of the world. And it was with him our Lord had the discourse a little before the paschal supper.

The compassionate Jesus had been fortifying their minds with proper considerations against his departure from them, and had told them that he was going to prepare for them a place in the mansions of the heavenly Canaan; that he was "the way, the truth, and the life;" and that "no man could come to the Father but by him."

Philip, not thoroughly understanding the force of his Master's reasoning, begged of him that he would "show" them "the Father."

Our blessed Lord gently reproved his ignorance, that, after attending so long to his instructions, he should not know that he was the image of his Father, the express character of his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, appearing in him; that he said and did nothing but by his Father's appointment, which if they did not believe, his miracles were a sufficient evidence; that such demands were, therefore, unnecessary and impertinent; and that it was an indication of great weakness in him, after three years' education under his discipline and instruction, to appear so ignorant with regard to these particulars.

CHAPTER II.

The Transactions of St. Philip to the time of his Martyrdom.

THE ancients tell us, that in the distribution made by the apostles of the several regions of the world, the Upper Asia fell to his share; where he laboured with an indefatigable diligence and industry. By the constancy and power of his preaching, and the efficacy of his miracles, he gained numerous converts, whom he baptised into the Christian faith, curing at once their bodies of infirmities and distempers, and their souls of errors and idolatry. He continued with them a considerable time in settling churches, and appointing them guides and ministers of religion.

After several years successfully exercising his apostolical office in all those parts, he came at last to Hierapolis, in Phrygia, a city remarkably rich and populous, but at the same time overrun with the most enormous idolatry.

St. Philip being grieved to see the people so wretchedly enslaved by error and superstition, continually offered his addresses to heaven, till by his prayers and often calling on the name of Christ he procured the death, or at least the vanishing, of an enormous serpent to which they paid adoration.

Having thus demolished their deity, he demonstrated to them how ridiculous and unjust it was for them to pay divine honours to such odious creatures; showed them that God alone was to be worshipped as the great parent of all the world, who in the beginning made man after his glorious image, and, when fallen from that innocent and happy state, sent his own Son into the world to redeem him; that, in order to perform this glorious work, he died on the cross, and rose again from the dead, and at the end of the world will come again to raise all the sons of men from the chambers of the dust, and sentence them to everlasting rewards and punishments. This discourse roused them from their lethargy; they were ashamed of their late idolatry, and great numbers embraced the doctrines of the gospel.

This provoked the great enemy of mankind, and he had recourse to his old methods, cruelty and persecution. The magistrates of the city seized the apostle, and, having thrown him into prison, caused him to be scourged. When this preparatory cruelty was over, he was led to execution, and, being bound, was hanged against a pillar; or, according to others, crucified. The apostle being dead, his body was taken down by St. Bartholomew, his fellow labourer in the gospel, and Mariamne, St. Philip's sister, the constant companion of his travels, and decently buried: after which they confirmed the people in the faith of Christ, and departed from them.

SAINT BARTHOLOMEW.

CHAPTER I.

The Transactions of St. Bartholomew from his Birth to the Ascension of his great Master.

THIS apostle is mentioned amongst the twelve immediate disciples of our Lord, under the appellation of Bartholomew; though it is evident, from diverse passages of Scripture, that he was also called Nathanael; we shall, therefore, in our account of his life consider the names of Nathanael and Bartholomew as belonging to one and the same person.

With regard to his descent and family, some are of opinion that he was a Syrian, and that he was descended from the Ptolemies of Egypt. But it is plain, from the evangelical history, that he was a Galilean; St. John having expressly told us that Nathanael was of Cana in Galilee.

The Scripture is silent with regard to his trade and manner of life, though from some circumstances there is room to imagine that he was a fisherman. He was at his first coming to Christ conducted by Philip, who told him they had now found the long-expected Messiah, so often foretold by Moses and the prophets, "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And when he objected that the Messiah could not be born at Nazareth, Philip desired him to come and satisfy himself that he was the Messiah.

At his approach, our blessed Saviour saluted him with this honourable appellation, that he was an "Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile;" not as possessed by nature, but as obtained by grace; for such perfection cannot be attached to human nature, but in the character of the blessed Jesus, of whom it is said, with peculiar propriety, that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners: also, that he "knew no sin, neither was guile," that is fraud or deception, "found in his tongue." Our Saviour knew that Bartholomew's doubt of his Messiahship arose from Philip's announcing him in the character of Jesus of Nazareth, a place stigmatized for the vices of its inhabitants; which, on a similar occasion, caused an interrogatory which accords with Bartholomew's opinon, Can any good come out of Nazareth? Our Saviour,

therefore, commends his frankness, by denominating him an "Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." In another sense he appeared to "be a true Israelite," or one that "waited for redemption in Israel," which, from the times mentioned in the Scripture predictions, he knew to be near at hand.

He was greatly surprised at our Lord's salutation, wondering how he could know him at first sight, as imagining he had never before seen his face. But he was answered, that he had seen him while he was yet under the fig-tree, even before Philip called him. Convinced by this instance of our Lord's divinity, he presently made his confession, that he was now sure that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Son of God, whom he had appointed to govern the church. Our blessed Saviour told told him that if from this instance he could believe him to be the Messiah, he should have far greater arguments to confirm his faith; for that he should hereafter behold the heavens opened to receive him, and the angels visibly appearing, joyful at his entrance into the heavenly Canaan.

CHAPTER II.

The Transactions of St. Bartholomew from the Ascension of Christ to his martyrdom.

OUR apostle having his peculiar spot allotted him for the promulgation of the gospel of his blessed Master, who had now ascended into heaven, and dispensed his Holy Spirit to fit and qualify his disciples for the important work, visited different parts of the world to preach the gospel, and penetrated as far as the higher India.

After spending a considerable time in India, and the eastern extremities of Asia, he returned to the northern and western parts; and we find him at Hierapolis, in Phrygia, labouring in concert with St. Philip to plant Christianity in those parts; and to convince the blind idolaters of the evil of their ways, and direct them in the paths that lead to eternal salvation. This enraged the bigoted magistrates, and he was, together with St. Paul, designed for martyrdom, and, in order to this, fastened to a cross; but their consciences pricking them for a time, they took St. Bartholomew down from the cross, and set him at liberty.

Hence he retired to Lycaonia, and St. Chrysostom assures us that he instructed and trained up the inhabitants in the Christian discipline.

His last remove was to Albanople, in Great Armenia, a place miserably overrun with idolatry, from which he laboured to reclaim the people. But his endeavours to "turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God," were so far from having the desired effect that they provoked the magistrates, who prevailed on the governor to put him to death; which he cheerfully underwent, sealing the truth of the doctrine he had preached with his blood.

SAINT MATTHEW.

CHAPTER I.

The transactions of St. Matthew from his birth to the Ascension of Christ.

ST. MATTHEW, called also Levi, though a Roman officer, was a true Hebrew, and probably a Galilean. His trade was that of a publican, or tax-gatherer to the Romans, an office detested by the generality of the Jews on two accounts; first, because having farmed the custom of the Romans, they used every method of oppression in order to pay their rents to them; secondly, because they demanded tribute of the Jews, who considered themselves as a free people, having received that privilege from God himself. And hence they had a common proverb among them, "Take not a wife out of that family in which there is a publican; for these are all publicans:" that is, they are all thieves, robbers, and notorious sinners. And to this proverbial speech and custom our blessed Saviour alludes, when speaking of a hardened sinner on whom neither private reproofs nor the public censures and admonitions of the church can prevail: "Let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican."

Our blessed Saviour having cured a person long afflicted with the palsy, retired out of Capernaum to walk by the sea-side, where he taught the people that flocked after him.

Here he saw Matthew sitting in his office, and called him to follow him. The man was rich, had a large and profitable employment, was a wise and prudent person, and doubtless understood what would be

his loss to comply with the call of Jesus. He was not ignorant that he must exchange wealth for poverty, a custom-house for a prison, and rich and powerful masters for a naked and despised Saviour. But he overlooked all these considerations, left all his interest and relations, to become our Lord's disciple, and to embrace a more spiritual way of life.

The Pharisees, who sought all opportunities of raising objections against the doctrines of the blessed Jesus, took this opportunity of suggesting to his disciples, that it was highly unbecoming so pure and holy a person as their Master appeared to be, to converse so familiarly with the worst of men—with publicans and sinners, persons infamous to a proverb. But he presently replied to them, that these were the sick, and therefore needed the physician; that his company was of most consequence where the souls of men most required it: that God preferred works of mercy and charity, especially in doing good to the souls of men, infinitely above all ritual observances; and that the principal design of his coming into the world was not to call the righteous, or those who, like themselves, vainly pretended to be so, but sinners, notorious convinced sinners, to repentance.

After St. Matthew's election to the apostleship, he continued with the rest till the ascension of his great and beloved Master; but the evangelical writers have recorded nothing particular concerning him during that period.

CHAPTER II.

The transactions of St. Matthew from the ascension of Christ to his martyrdom.

AFTER our blessed Saviour's ascension into heaven, St. Matthew, for the first eight years at least, preached in different parts of Judea; but afterwards he left the country of Palestine, to convert the Gentile world. Before his departure he was entreated by the Jewish converts to write the history of the life and actions of the blessed Jesus, and leave it among them as a standing monument of what he had so often delivered to them in his sermons. This he readily complied with, as we shall more particularly mention in giving an account of his Gospel.

After his leaving Judea, he travelled into several parts, especially Ethiopia: but the particular places he visited are not known with any certainty.

However, after labouring indefatigably in the vineyard of his Master, he suffered martyrdom at a city of

Ethiopia, called Naddabar; but by what kind of death is not absolutely known, though the general opinion is, that he was slain with a halbert.

St. Matthew was a remarkable instance of the power of religion in bringing men to a better temper of mind. If we reflect upon his circumstances while he continued a stranger to the great Redeemer of mankind, we shall find that the love of the world had possessed his heart. But notwithstanding this, no sooner did Christ call him, than he abandoned, without the least scruple or hesitation, all his riches; nay, he not only renounced his lucrative trade, but ran the greatest hazard of displeasing the masters who employed him, for quitting their service without giving them the least notice, and leaving his accounts in apparent confusion. Had our blessed Saviour appeared as a secular prince clothed with temporal power and authority, it would have been no wonder for him to have gone over to his service; but when he appeared under all the circumstances of meanness and disgrace, when he seems to have promised his followers nothing outwardly but sufferings in this life, and to have proposed no other rewards than the invisible encouragements of another world, his change appears truly wonderful and surprising: but divine grace can subdue all opposition.

His contempt of the world appeared in his exemplary temperance, and abstemiousness from all delights and pleasures; nay, even from the ordinary conveniences and accommodations of it. He was mean and modest in his own opinion, always preferring others to himself; for whereas the other evangelists, in describing the apostles by pairs, constantly place him before St. Thomas, he modestly places him before himself. The rest of the evangelists are careful to mention the honour of his apostleship, but speak of his former sordid, dishonest, and disgraceful course of life only under the name of Levi; while he himself sets it down, with all the circumstances, under his own proper and common name. A conduct which at once commends the prudence and candour of the apostle, and suggests to us this useful reflection, that the greatest sinners are not excluded from divine grace; nor can any, if penitent, have just reason to despair when publicans and sinners find mercy at the throne of grace.

The last thing we shall remark in the life of the apostle is his Gospel, written at the entreaty of the Jewish converts, while he abode in Palestine; but at what time is uncertain: some will have it to have been

written eight, some fifteen, and some thirty years after our Lord's ascension. It was first written in Hebrew, but soon after translated into Greek by one of the disciples.

After the Greek translation was admitted, the Hebrew copy was chiefly owned and used by the Nazaræi, a middle sect between Jews and Christians: with the former, they adhered to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law; and with the latter, they believed in Christ, and embraced his religion; and hence this Gospel has been styled, "The Gospel according to the Hebrews;" and "the Gospel of the Nazarenes."

SAINT THOMAS.

CHAPTER I.

The transactions of St. Thomas from his Birth to the Ascension of our blessed Saviour.

EVANGELICAL history is entirely silent with regard either to the country or kindred of Thomas. It is, however, certain that he was a Jew, and in all probability a Galilean.

He was together with the rest called to the apostleship; and not long after gave an eminent instance of his being ready to undergo the most melancholy fate that might attend him. For when the rest of the apostles dissuaded their Master from going into Judea at the time of Lazarus' death, because the Jews lately endeavoured to stone him, Thomas desired them not to hinder his journey thither, though it might cost them all their lives. "Let us go," said he, "that we may die with him;" concluding, that instead of Lazarus being raised from the dead, they should all like him be placed in the chambers of the dust.

When the holy Jesus, a little before his sufferings, had been speaking to them of the joys of heaven, and had told them that he was going to prepare mansions for them, that they might follow him, and that they knew both the place whither he was going, and the way thither; our apostle replied, that they knew not whither he was going, much less the way thither. To which our Lord returned this short, but satisfactory answer, "I am the

way;" I am the person whom the Father has sent into the world to show mankind the paths that lead to eternal life, and therefore you cannot miss the way, if you follow my example.

After the disciples had seen their great master expire on the cross, their minds were distracted by hopes and fears concerning his resurrection, about which they were not then fully satisfied; which engaged him the sooner to hasten his appearance, that by the sensible manifestations of himself, he might put the matter beyond all possibility of dispute. Accordingly, the very day in which he arose from the dead, he came into the house where they were assembled, while the doors about them were close shut, and gave them sufficient assurance that he was risen from the dead.

At this meeting Thomas was absent, having probably never joined their company since their dispersion in the garden, where every one's fears prompted him to consult his own safety. At his return they told him that the Lord had appeared to them; but he obstinately refused to give credit to what they said, or believe that it was really he, presuming it to be rather a spectre or apparition, unless he might see the very print of the nails, and feel the wounds in his hands and side.

But our compassionate Saviour would not take the least notice of his perverse obstinacy, but on that day seven-night came back again to them, as they were solemnly met at their devotion, and calling to Thomas, bade him look upon his hands, put his fingers into the prints of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side, to satisfy his faith by demonstration from the senses. Thomas was soon convinced of his error and obstinacy, confessing that he now acknowledged him to be his Lord and Master, saying, "My Lord and my God." Our Lord answered, that it was happy for him he believed the testimony of his own senses; but that it would have been more commendable in him to have believed without seeing, because it was foretold that the Son of God should burst the chains of death, and rise again from the dead.

CHAPTER II.

The transactions of St. Thomas from the Ascension of the Son of God to his death.

OUR great Redeemer having, according to promise before his ascension, poured an extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost upon his disciples, to qualify them for the great work of preaching the gospel, St. Thomas, as well as the rest,

preached the gospel, in several parts of Judea; and, after the dispersion of the Christian church in Jerusalem, repaired into Parthia, the province assigned him for his ministry. After which, as Sempronius and others inform us, he preached the gospel to the Medes, Persians, Carmanians, Hyrcani, Bactrians, and the neighbouring nations. During his preaching in Persia, he is said to have met with the Magi, or wise men, who had taken that long journey at our Saviour's birth to worship him; whom he baptized, and took with him as his companions and assistants in propagating the gospel.

Leaving Persia, he travelled into Ethiopia, preaching the glad tidings of the gospel, healing their sick, and working other miracles, to prove he had his commission from on high. And after travelling through these countries, he entered India.

When the Portuguese first visited these countries after their discovery of a passage by the Cape of Good Hope, they received the following particulars, partly from constant and uncontroverted traditions preserved by the Christians in those parts; namely, that St. Thomas came first to Socotora, an island in the Arabian Sea, and then to Cranganor, where having converted many from the error of their ways, he travelled farther into the East; and, having successfully preached the gospel, returned back to the kingdom of Coromandel, where, at Maliapour, the metropolis of that kingdom, not far from the mouth of the Ganges, he began to erect a place for divine worship, till prohibited by the idolatrous priests, and Sagamo, prince of that country. But after performing several miracles, the work was suffered to proceed, and Sagamo himself embraced the Christian faith, whose example was soon followed by great numbers of his friends and subjects.

This remarkable success alarmed the Bramins, who plainly perceived that their religion would soon be extirpated, unless some method could be found of putting a stop to the progress of Christianity; and therefore resolved to put the apostle to death. At a small distance from the city was a tomb, whither St. Thomas often retired for private devotions. Hither the Bramins and their armed followers pursued him; and, while he was at prayer, they first shot at him with a shower of darts, after which one of the priests ran him through with a lance.

His body was taken up by his disciples, and buried in the church he had lately erected, and which was afterwards improved into a fabric of great magnificence.

St. Chrysostom says, that St. Tho-

mas, who at first was the weakest and most incredulous of all the apostles, became, through Christ's condescending to satisfy his scruples, and the power of the divine grace, the most active and invincible of them all; travelling over most parts of the world, and living without fear in the midst of barbarous nations, through the efficacy of that almighty arm, which can give power to the faint and to them that have no might, and thus make the weakest vessels to perform acts of the greatest difficulty and moment.

SAINT JAMES THE LESS.

IT has been doubted by some whether this was the same with that St. James who was afterwards bishop of Jerusalem, two of this name being mentioned in the sacred writings, namely St. James the Great, and St. James the Less, both apostles. The ancients mention a third, surnamed the Just, which they will have to be distinct from the former, and bishop of Jerusalem. But this opinion is built upon a sandy foundation, for nothing is plainer than that St. James the apostle (whom St. Paul calls "our Lord's brother," and reckons, with Peter and John, one of the pillars of the church) was the same who presided among the apostles, doubtless by virtue of his apostolical office, and determined the causes in the synod of Jerusalem. It is reasonable to think that he was the son of Joseph, afterwards the husband of Mary, by his first wife, whom St. Jerome styles Escha; and adds, that she was the daughter of Aggi, brother to Zaccharias, the father of John the Baptist. Hence he was reputed our Lord's brother. We find indeed several mentioned as the brethren of our Saviour, in the evangelical history; but in what sense was greatly controverted by the ancients. St. Jerome, St. Chrysostom and some others, will have them to be so called from their being the sons of Mary, cousin-german, or (according to the Hebrew idiom) sister to the Virgin Mary.

But Eusebius, Epiphanius, and many others, tell us they were the children of Joseph by a former wife. And this seems to be more natural, and best agrees with what the evan-

gelists say of them when they enumerate the questions of the Jews, evidently implying their astonishment that a person descended from, and related to, not the opulent and the mighty, but those of a humble sphere, as his parents and brethren were known to be, should possess such extraordinary endowments. The Jews looked for a Messiah invested with all the pomp and splendour of an earthly potentate; well then might they ask, when they beheld the display of his power, "Whence then hath this man these things?"

After the resurrection, he was honoured with the particular appearance of our Lord to him, which, though passed over in silence by the evangelists, is recorded by St. Paul.

Some time after this appearance, he was chosen bishop of Jerusalem, and preferred before all the rest for his near relation to Christ; for the same reason we find Simon chosen to be his immediate successor in that see, because after St. James he was our Lord's next kinsman; a consideration that made Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, though they had been particularly honoured by our Saviour, not to contend for this high and honourable station, but freely choose James bishop of Jerusalem.

When St. Paul came to Jerusalem after his conversion, he applied to St. James, and was by him honoured with "the right hand of fellowship." And it was to St. James that Peter sent the news of his miraculous deliverance out of prison. "Go," said he, "show these things unto James, and to the brethren;" that is, to the whole church, especially to St. James, the pastor of it.

He performed every part of his duty with all possible care and industry, omitting no particular necessary to be observed by a diligent and faithful guide of souls; strengthening the weak, instructing the ignorant, reducing the erroneous, reproving the obstinate; and the constancy of his sermons conquering the stubbornness of that perverse and refractory generation he had to deal with, many of the nobler and richer sort being persuaded to embrace the Christian faith.

But a person so careful, so successful in his charge, could not fail of exciting the spite and malice of his enemies; a sort of men to whom the apostle has given too true a character, that "they please not God, and are contrary to all men." They were vexed to see St. Paul had escaped their hands by appealing unto Cæsar, and therefore turned their fury against St. James; but being unable to effect their design

under the government of Festus, they determined to attempt it under the procuratorship of Albinus, his successor; Ananus the Younger, of the sect of the Sadducees, being high-priest.

In order to this, a council was summoned, and the apostle, with others, arraigned and condemned as violaters of the law. But that the action might appear more plausible and popular, the Scribes and Pharisees, masters in the art of dissimulation, endeavoured to ensnare him; and, at their first coming, told him that they had all placed the greatest confidence in him; that the whole nation, as well as they, gave him the title of a just man, and one who was no respecter of persons; that they therefore desired he would correct the error and false opinion the people had conceived of Jesus, whom they considered as the Messiah, and take this opportunity of the universal confluence to the paschal solemnity, to set them right in their opinions in this particular, and would go with them to the top of the temple, where he might be seen and heard by all.

The apostle readily consented, and, being advantageously placed on a pinnacle of the temple, they addressed him in the following manner:—Tell us, for we have all the reason in the world to believe that the people are thus generally led away with the doctrine of Jesus who was crucified; tell us, what is the instruction of the crucified Jesus? To which the apostle answered, with an audible voice, "Why do you inquire of Jesus the Son of man? He sits in heaven, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and will come again in the clouds of heaven." The people below hearing this, glorified the blessed Jesus, and openly proclaimed, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

The Scribes and Pharisees now perceived that they had acted foolishly; that instead of altering, they had confirmed the people in their belief; and that there was no way left but to dispatch him immediately, in order to warn others by his sufferings, not to believe in Jesus of Nazareth. Accordingly they suddenly cried out, That James himself was seduced, and become an impostor; and they immediately threw him from the pinnacle on which he stood, into the court below; but not being killed on the spot, he recovered himself so far as to rise on his knees, and pray fervently to heaven for his murderers. But malice is too diabolical to be pacified with kindness, or satisfied with cruelty; accordingly, his enemies, vexed that they had not fully accomplished their work, poured a

shower of stones upon him, while he was imploring their forgiveness at the throne of grace; and one of them, dissatisfied with this cruel treatment, put an end to his misery with a fuller's club.

Thus did this great and good man finish his course, in the ninety-sixth year of his age, and about twenty-four years after our blessed Saviour's ascension into heaven. His death was lamented by all good men, even by the sober and just persons among the Jews themselves, as Josephus himself confesses.

He was a man of exemplary piety and devotion, educated under the strictest rules and institutions of religion. Prayer was his constant business and delight; he seems as it were to have lived upon it, and continually to have had his conversation in heaven; and he who has told us, "that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much," found it so by his own experience, Heaven lending a more immediate ear to his petitions; so that in a time of remarkable drought, on his praying for rain, the clouds melted into fruitful showers.

Nor was his charity towards men less than his piety towards God: he did good to all, watched diligently over the souls of men, and studied to advance their eternal welfare. He was of a remarkably meek and humble temper, honouring what was excellent in others, and concealing what was valuable in himself. Neither the eminence of his relation to the blessed Jesus, nor the dignity of the place he so worthily filled, could induce him to entertain lofty thoughts of himself above the rest of his brethren; on the contrary, he strove to conceal whatever might place him in a higher rank than the other disciples of the Lord of glory. Though he was a relative to the Redeemer of mankind, he styles himself only "the servant of our Lord Jesus Christ," not so much as mentioning his being an apostle.

His temperance was admirable, wholly abstaining from flesh, drinking neither wine nor strong drink, and never using the bath. He lived indeed after the strictest rules of the Nazarite order; and as the mitre he wore on his head evinced his priesthood, which was rather from Melchizedec than Aaron, so he never shaved his head, or used any ointments; his habit and diet, and the great severity of his life, showed him to belong to the Nazarite institution, to which he was consecrated even from his mother's womb. In short, he was a man of so divine a temper, that he was at once the love and wonder of his age: and from the reputation of his holy and religious life, he was styled "James the Just."

He wrote only one epistle, probably not long before his martyrdom, as appears from some passages in it relating to the near approach of the destruction of the Jews. He directed it to the Jewish converts dispersed up and down those Eastern countries, to comfort them under their sufferings, and confirm them against error. He saw a great degeneracy and declension of manners coming on; and that the purity of the Christian faith began to be undermined by the doctrines and practices of the Gnostics, who, under pretence of zeal for the legal rites, generally mixed with the Jews; he beheld libertinism flowing in apace, and the way to heaven apparently made soft and easy by men who declaimed against good works as useless and unnecessary, and wrested the Scriptures to subserve the purposes of their idle and corrupt affections: our apostle, therefore, recommends that faith which works by love, purifies the heart, and brings forth obedience to the will of God, as the only faith which will instrumentally save the soul from eternal death.

SAINT SIMON THE ZEALOT.

ST. Simon in the catalogue of the apostles is styled "Simon the Canaanite;" whence some conjecture he was born in Cana of Galilee, and others will have him to have been the bridegroom mentioned by St. John, at whose marriage our blessed Saviour turned the water into wine. But this word has no relation to his country, or the place of his nativity, being derived from the Hebrew word "kana," which signifies "zeal," and denotes a warm and sprightly temper. What some of the evangelists, therefore, call "Canaanite," others, rendering the Hebrew by the Greek word, style him "zealot;" not so much from his ardent affection to his Master, and his desire of advancing his religion in the world, as from his warm and active temper, and zealous forwardness in some particular sect of religion before his coming to our Saviour.

In order to understand this the better, it will be necessary to observe, that as there were several sects and parties among the Jews, so there was one, either a distinct

sect, or at least a branch of the Pharisees, called the sect of the Zealots. This sect of the Zealots took upon them to execute punishments in extraordinary cases; and that not only by the connivance but with the permission both of the rulers and people, till in process of time their zeal degenerated into all kinds of licentiousness and wild extravagance, and they not only became the pests of the commonwealth at home, but opened the door for the Romans to break in upon them, to their final and irrevocable ruin. They were continually prompting the people to throw off the Roman yoke, and assert their natural liberty; taking care, when they had thrown all things into confusion, to make their own advantage of the tumult. Josephus gives a large account of them, and everywhere bewails them as the great plague of the nation.

Many attempts were made, especially by Annas the high-priest, to reduce them to order, and oblige them to observe the rules of sobriety; but all were in vain. They continued their violent proceedings, and, joining with the Idumeans, committed every kind of outrage They broke into the sanctuary, slew the priests themselves before the altar, and filled the streets of Jerusalem with tumults, rapine, and blood. Nay, when Jerusalem was closely besieged by the Roman army, they continued their detestable proceedings, creating fresh tumults and factions, and were indeed the principal cause of the ill success of the Jews in that fatal war.

This is a true account of the sect of the Zealots; though, whatever St. Simon was before, we have no reason to suspect but after his conversion he was very zealous for the honour of his Master, and considered all those who were enemies to Christ as enemies to himself, however near they might be to him in any natural relation. And as he was very exact in all the practical duties of the Christian religion, so he showed a very serious and pious indignation towards those who professed religion, and a faith in Christ, with their mouths, but dishonoured their sacred profession by their irregular and vicious lives; as some of the first professing Christians really did.

St. Simon continued in communion with the rest of the apostles and disciples at Jerusalem; and at the feast of Pentecost received the same miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost; so that, as he was qualified with the rest of the brethren for the apostolical office, in propagating the gospel of the Son of God, we cannot doubt of his exercising his gifts with the same zeal and fidelity,

though in what part of the world is uncertain. Some say he went into Egypt, Cyrene, and Africa, preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of those remote and barbarous countries. And others add, that after he had passed through those burning wastes he took ship, and visited the frozen regions of the north, preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of the western parts; where, having converted great multitudes, and sustained the greatest hardships and persecutions, he was at last crucified, and buried, but the place where is unknown.

SAINT JUDE.

THIS apostle is mentioned by three several names in the evangelical history, namely, Jude or Judas, Thaddeus, and Lebbeus.

He was brother to St. James the Less, afterwards bishop of Jerusalem, being the son of Joseph, the reputed father of Christ, by a former wife. It is not known when or by what means he became a disciple of our blessed Saviour, nothing being said of him till we find him in the catalogue of the twelve apostles; nor afterwards, till Christ's last supper, when, discoursing with them about his departure, and comforting them with a promise that he would return to them again (meaning after his resurrection), and that the "world should see him no more, though they should see him," our apostle said to his Master, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?" Paulinus tells us that the province which fell to the share of St. Jude in the apostolic division of the provinces was Libya; but he does not tell us whether it was the Cyrenian Libya, which is thought to have received the gospel from St. Mark, or the more southern parts of Africa. But however that be, in his first setting out to preach the gospel he travelled up and down Judea and Galilee, then through Samaria into Idumea, and to the cities of Arabia and the neighbouring countries, and afterwards to Syria and Mesopotamia. Nicephorus adds, that he came at last to Edessa, where Abagarus governed, and where Thaddeus, one of the seventy, had already sown the seeds of the gospel. Here he

perfected what the other had begun; and having by his sermons and miracles established the religion of Jesus, he died in peace. But others say that he was slain at Berytus, and honourably buried there. The writers of the Latin church are unanimous in declaring that he travelled into Persia, where, after great success in his apostolic ministry for many years, he was at last, for his freely and openly reproving the superstitious rites and customs of the Magi, cruelly put to death.

St. Jude left only one epistle, which is placed the last of those seven styled Catholic in the sacred canon. It has no particular inscription, as the other six have, but it is thought to have been primarily intended for the Christian Jews in their several dispersions, as St. Peter's epistles were. In it he tells them that he at first intended to write to them in general of the common salvation, and establish and confirm them in it; but seeing the doctrine of Christ attacked on every side by seducers, he conceived it more necessary to spend his time in exhorting them to fight manfully in defence of the "faith once delivered to the saints," and oppose the false teachers who laboured so indefatigably to corrupt it.

It was some time before this epistle was generally received in the church. The author, indeed, like St. James, St. John, and sometimes St. Paul himself, does not call himself an apostle, styling himself only "the servant of Christ." But he has added what is equivalent, "Jude the brother of James," a character that can belong to no one but our apostle. And surely the humility of a follower of Jesus should be no objection against his writings.

SAINT MATTHIAS.

AS Matthias was not an apostle of the first election, immediately called and chosen by the Son of God himself, it cannot be expected that any account of him can be found in the evangelical history. He was one of our Lord's disciples, probably one of the seventy: he had attended on him the whole time of his public ministry, and after his death was elected to the apostleship, to supply the place of Judas, who after betraying his great Lord and Master, laid violent hands on himself.

The defection of Judas having made a vacancy in the family of the apostles, the first thing they did, after their return from mount Olivet, when their great Master ascended to the throne of his glory, was to fill it up with a proper person.

Accordingly two persons were proposed, Joseph, called Barsabas, and Matthias, both duly qualified for the important office. The method of election was by lots, a way common both among the Jews and Gentiles for determining doubtful and difficult cases, especially in choosing judges or magistrates. And this course seems to have been taken by the apostles, because the Holy Ghost was not yet fully given, by whose immediate dictates and inspirations they were afterwards chiefly guided. The prayer being ended, the lots were drawn; by which it appeared that Matthias was the person: he was accordingly numbered among the twelve apostles.

Not long after this election, the promised powers of the Holy Ghost were conferred upon the apostles, to qualify them for that great and difficult employment upon which they were sent, namely, the establishing the holy religion of the Son of God among the children of men.

St. Matthias spent the first year of his ministry in Judea, where he reaped a very considerable harvest of souls, and then travelled into different parts of the world, to publish the glad tidings of salvation to a people who had never before heard of a Saviour; but the particular parts he visited are not certainly known.

It is uncertain by what kind of death he left the regions of mortality, and sealed the truth of the gospel he had so assiduously preached, with his blood. Dorotheus says, he finished his course at Sebastople, and was buried there near the tem-

ple of the sun. An ancient Martyrology reports him to have been seized by the Jews, and as a blasphemer to have been stoned, and then beheaded. But the Greek offices, supported herein by several ancient breviaries, tell us that he was crucified.

SAINT MARK.

ST. Mark was descended from Jewish parents, and of the tribe of Levi. Nor was it uncommon among the Jews to change their names on some remarkable revolution or accident of life, or when they intended to travel into any of the European provinces of the Roman empire. The ancients generally considered him as one of the seventy disciples; and Epiphanius expressly tells us that he was one of those who, taking exception at our Lord's discourse of "eating his flesh and drinking his blood, went back and walked no more with him." But there appears no manner of foundation for these opinions, nor likewise for that of Nicephorus, who will have him to be the son of Peter's sister.

Eusebius tells us that St. Mark was sent into Egypt by St. Peter to preach the gospel, and accordingly planted a church in Alexandria, the metropolis of it; and his success was so very remarkable, that he converted multitudes both of men and women; persuading them not only to embrace the Christian religion, but also a life of more than ordinary strictness.

St. Mark did not confine himself to Alexandria and the oriental parts of Egypt, but removed westward to Lybia, passing through the countries of Marmacia, Pentapolis, and others adjacent, where, though the people were both barbarous in their manners and idolatrous in their worship, yet by his preaching and miracles he prevailed on them to embrace the tenets of the gospel; nor did he leave them till he had confirmed them in the faith.

After this long tour he returned to Alexandria, where he preached with the greatest freedom, ordered and disposed of the affairs of the church, and wisely provided for its prosperity, by constituting governors and pastors of it. But the restless enemy of the souls of men

would not suffer our apostle to continue in peace and quietness; for while he was assiduously labouring in the vineyard of his Master, the idolatrous inhabitants, about the time of Easter, when they were celebrating the solemnities of Serapis, tumultuously entered the church, forced St. Mark, then performing divine service thence; and, binding his feet with cords, they dragged him through the streets, and over the most craggy places, to the Bucelus, a precipice near the sea, leaving him there in a lonesome prison for that night; but his great and beloved Master appeared to him in a vision comforting and encouraging his soul under the ruins of his shattered body. The next morning early the tragedy began afresh, for they dragged him about in the same cruel and barbarous manner, till he expired. But their malice did not end with his death; they burnt his mangled body, after they had so inhumanly deprived it of life: but the Christians after the horrid tragedy was over gathered his bones and ashes, and decently interred them near the place where he used to preach. His remains were afterwards with great pomp removed from Alexandria to Venice, where they were religiously honoured, and he was adopted the titular saint and patron of that state.

It is said he suffered martyrdom on the 25th of April, but the year is not absolutely known: the most probable opinion, however, is that it happened about the end of Nero's reign.

His Gospel, the only writing he left behind him, was written at the entreaty and earnest desire of the converts at Rome, who, not content with having heard St. Peter preach, pressed St. Mark, his fellow disciple, to commit to writing an historical account of what he had delivered to them, which he performed with equal faithfulness and brevity; and being perused and approved of by St. Peter, it was commanded to be publicly read in their assemblies. It was frequently styled St. Peter's Gospel, not because he dictated it to St. Mark, but because the latter composed it in the same manner as St. Peter usually delivered his discourses to the people. And this is probably the reason of what St. Chrysostom observes, that in his style of expression he delights to imitate St. Peter, representing a great deal in a few words. The remarkable impartiality he observes in all his relations is plain from hence, that so far from concealing the shameful lapse and denial of Peter, he describes it with more aggravating circumstances than any of the other evangelists.

SAINT LUKE

THIS disciple of the blessed Jesus was born at Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, a city celebrated by the greatest writers of those times for the pleasantness of its situation, the fertility of its soil, the riches of its commerce, the wisdom of its senate, and the civility and politeness of its inhabitants. It was eminent for schools of learning, which produced the most renowned masters in the arts and sciences. So that being born, as it were, in the lap of the Muses, he could not well fail of acquiring an ingenuous and liberal education. But he was not contented with the learning of his own country; he travelled for improvement into several parts of Greece and Egypt, and became particularly skilled in physic, which he made his profession.

But those who would, from this particular, infer the quality of his birth and fortune, forget that the healing art was in those early times generally practised by servants; and hence Grotius is of opinion that St. Luke was carried to Rome, and lived there, a servant to some noble family, in quality of physician; but after obtaining his freedom he returned into his own country, and probably continued his profession till his death, it being highly consistent with and in many cases subservient to, the care of souls.

He was also famous for his skill in another art, namely painting, as appears from an ancient inscription found in a vault near the church of St. Maria de Via Lata, at Rome, supposed to have been the place where St. Paul dwelt, which mentions a picture of the blessed Virgin; *Una ex vii ab Luca depictis,* "being one of the seven painted by St. Luke."

St. Luke was a Jewish proselyte; but at what time he became a Christian is uncertain. It is the opinion of some, from the introduction to his Gospel, that he had the facts from the reports of others who were eye-witnesses, and suppose him to have been converted by St. Paul; and that he learned his Gospel from the conversation of that apostle, and wrote it under his direction; and that when St. Paul in one of his epistles says, "according to my Gospel," he means this of St. Luke, which he styled "his" from the great share he had in the composition of it.

On the other hand those who hold that he wrote his Gospel from his own personal knowledge, observe that he could not receive it from St. Paul, as an eye-witness of the matters contained in it, because all those matters were transacted before his conversion; and that he never saw our Lord before he appeared to him on his journey to Damascus, which was some time after he ascended into heaven. Consequently, when St. Paul says, "according to my Gospel," he means no more than that gospel in general which he preached; the whole preaching of the apostles being styled the gospel.

But however this be, St. Luke became the inseparable companion of St. Paul in all his travels, and his constant fellow-labourer in the work of the ministry. This endeared him to that apostle, who seems delighted with owning him for his fellow-labourer; and in calling him the "beloved physician," and the "brother whose praise is the gospel."

St. Luke wrote two books for the use of the church, his Gospel, and the Acts of the Apostles; both which he dedicated to Theophilus, which many of the ancients supposed to be a feigned name, denoting a lover of God, a title common to all sincere Christians. The others think it was a real person because the title of "most excellent" is attributed to him; the usual title and form of address in those times to princes and great men.

His Gospel contains the principal transactions of our Lord's life; and the particulars omitted by him are in general of less importance than those of the other evangelists.

With regard to the Acts of the Apostles, written by St. Luke, the work was doubtless performed at Rome, about the time of St. Paul's residing there, with which he concludes his history. It contains the actions and sometimes the sufferings, of the principal apostles, especially St. Paul, whose activity in the cause of Christ made him bear a great part in the labours of his Master; and St. Luke being his constant attendant, an eye-witness of the whole carriage of his life, and privy to his most intimate transactions, was consequently capable of giving a more full and satisfactory account of them. Among other things he enumerates the great miracles the apostles did in confirmation of their doctrine.

In both these treatises his manner of writing is exact and accurate; his style noble and elegant, sublime and lofty, and yet clear and perspicuous, flowing with an easy and natural grace and sweetness, admirably adapted to an historical design.

In short, as an historian he was faithful in his relations, and elegant in his writings; as a minister, careful and diligent for the good of souls; as a Christian, devout and pious; and to crown all the rest, laid down his life in testimony of the gospel he had both preached and published to the world.

SAINT BARNABAS.

ST. Barnabas was at first called Joses, a softer termination generally given by the Greeks to Joseph. His fellow-disciples added the name of Barnabas, as significant of some extraordinary property in him. St. Luke interprets it "the son of consolation," from his being ever ready to administer to the afflicted, both by word and action.

He was a descendant of the tribe of Levi, of a family removed out of Judea, and settled in the isle of Cyprus, where they had purchased an estate, as the Levites might do, out of their own country. His parents finding him of a promising genius and disposition, placed him in one of the schools of Jerusalem, under the tuition of Gamaliel, St. Paul's master; an incident which in all probability laid the first foundation for that intimacy that afterwards subsisted betwen these two eminent servants of the blessed Jesus.

The first mention we find of St Barnabas in the holy Scripture is the record of that great and worthy service he did the church of Christ by succouring it with the sale of his patrimony in Cyprus, the whole of which he laid at the apostles' feet, to be put in the common stock, and disposed of as they should think fit among the indigent followers of the holy Jesus. This worthy example was followed by those who were blessed with temporal goods; none kept their plenty to themselves, but turned their houses and lands into money, and devoted it to the common use of the church. St. Barnabas is, indeed, mentioned as selling the most valuable estate on this occasion; or being the most forward and ready to begin a common stock, and set others a laudable pattern of charity and benevolence.

And now St. Barnabas became considerable in the ministry and go-

vernment of the church; for we find that St. Paul, coming to Jerusalem three years after his conversion, and not readily procuring admittance into the church, because he had been so grievous a persecutor of it, and might still be suspected of a design to betray it, addressed himself to Barnabas, a leading man among the Christians, and one that had personal knowledge of him. He accordingly introduced him to Peter and James, and satisfied them of the sincerity of his conversion, and in what a miraculous manner it was brought about. This recommendation carried so much weight with it, that Paul was not only received into the communion of the apostles, but taken into Peter's house, "and abode with him fifteen days."—*Gal.* i. 18.

About four or five years after this, the agreeable news was brought to Jerusalem, that several of their body who had been driven out of Judea by the persecutions raised about St. Stephen, had preached at Antioch with such success that a great number both of Jews and proselytes embraced Christianity; and were desirous that some of the apostles would come down and visit them. This request was immediately granted, and Barnabas was deputed to settle the new plantation. Being himself "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," his charitable deeds accompanying his discourses, and his pious life exemplifying his sound doctrine, the people were greatly influenced by him, and very considerable additions were made to the Christian church. But there being too large a field for one labourer, he went to fetch Saul from Tarsus, who came back with him to Antioch, and assisted him a whole year in establishing that church. Their labours were prosperous: their assemblies were crowded; and the disciples, who before this were called among themselves, "brethren, believers, elect," and by their enemies, "Nazarenes and Galileans," were now called Christians first at Antioch.

When the apostles had fulfilled their charitable embassy, and stayed some time at Jerusalem to see the good effects of it, they returned again to Antioch, bringing with them John, whose surname was Mark, the son of Mary, sister to Barnabas, and at whose house the disciples found both security for their persons, and conveniency for the solemnities of their worship. But soon after the apostles' return to Antioch, an express revelation was made to the church, by the mouth of one of the prophets who ministered there, that Barnabus and Saul should be set apart for an extraordinary work,

unto which the Holy Ghost had appointed them. Upon this declaration the church set apart a day for a solemn mission: after devout prayer and fasting, they laid their hands upon them, and ordained them to their new work; which was to travel over certain countries, and preach the gospel to the Gentiles. From this joint commission, Barnabas obtained the name of an apostle, not only among later writers of the church, but with St. Paul himself, as we find in the history of the Acts of the Apostles.

Paul and Barnabas being thus solemnly appointed "the apostles of the Gentiles," entered upon their province, taking with them John Mark for their minister or deacon, who assisted them in many ecclesiastical offices, particularly in taking care of the poor.

The first city they visited after their departure from Antioch was Seleucia, a city of Syria, adjoining to the sea; from which they sailed for the island of Cyprus, the native place of St. Barnabas, and arrived at Salamis, a port formerly remarkable for its trade. Here they boldly preached the doctrines of the gospel in the synagogues of the Jews; and thence travelled to Paphos, the capital of the island, and famous for a temple dedicated to Venus, the titular goddess of Cyprus. Here their preaching was attended with remarkable success; Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, being among others converted to the Christian faith.

Leaving Cyprus, they crossed the sea to preach in Pamphylia, where their deacon John, to the great grief of his uncle Barnabas, left them, and returned to Jerusalem; either tired with continual travels, or discouraged at the unavoidable dangers and difficulties which experience had sufficiently informed him would constantly attend the first preachers of the gospel, from hardened Jews and idolatrous Gentiles.

Soon after their arrival at Lystra, Paul cured a man who had been lame from his mother's womb; which so astonished the inhabitants, that they believed them to be gods, who had visited the world in the forms of men. Barnabas they treated as Jupiter, their sovereign deity, either because of his age, or the gravity and comeliness of his person; for all the writers of antiquity represent him as a person of a venerable aspect and a majestic presence. But the apostles, with the greatest humility, declared themselves to be but mortal: and the inconstant populace soon satisfied themselves of the truth of what they had asserted; for at the persuasion of their indefatigable perse-

cutors, who followed them thither also, they made an assault upon them, and stoned Paul till they left him for dead. But, supported by an invisible power from on high, he soon recovered his spirits and strength, and the apostles immediately departed for Derbe. Soon after their arrival, they again applied themselves to the work of the ministry, and converted many to the religion of the blessed Jesus.

From Derbe they returned back to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, in Pisidia, "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith; and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."—*Acts* xiv. 22. After a short stay, they again visited the churches of Pamphylia, Perga, and Attala, where they took ship, and sailed to Antioch in Syria, the place from whence they first set out. Soon after their arrival they called the church of this city together, and gave them an account of their travels, and the great success with which their preaching in the Gentile world had been attended.

But they had not long continued in this city before their assistance was required to compose a difference in the church occasioned by some of the Jewish converts, who endeavoured to persuade the Gentiles that they were bound to observe the law of Moses, as well as that of Christ, and be circumcised as well as baptized. Barnabas endeavoured to dissuade the zealots from pressing such unnecessary observances; but all his endeavours proving ineffectual, he was deputed, with St. Paul and others, to the church at Jerusalem, to submit the question to be determined there in a full assembly. During their stay at Jerusalem, Mark in all probability reconciled himself to Barnabas, and returned with him and St. Paul to Antioch, after they had succeeded in their business in Jerusalem, and obtained a decree from the synod there that the Gentile converts should not have circumcision and other Mosaic rites imposed upon them.

This determination generally comforted and quieted the minds of the Gentiles, but it did not prevent the bigoted Jews from keeping up a separation from them; and that with so much obstinacy that when St. Peter some time after came to Antioch, he, for fear of offending them, deviated from his former practice, and late speech and vote in the synod of Jerusalem, by refraining from all kind of communion with the Gentiles; and Barnabas himself, though so great and good a man, was induced by the authority of his example to commit the same error; but, doubtless on being

reproved by St. Paul, they both took more courage, and walked according to the true liberty and freedom of the gospel.

Some days after this last occurrence, Paul made a proposal to Barnabas that they should repeat their late travels among the Gentiles, and see how the churches they had planted increased in their numbers, and improved in the doctrines they had taught them. Barnabas very readily complied with the motion; but desired they might take with them his reconciled nephew, John Mark. This Paul absolutely refused, because in their former voyage Mark had not shown the constancy of a faithful minister of Christ, but, consulting his own ease at a dangerous juncture, departed from them without leave at Pamphylia, and returned to Jerusalem. Barnabas still insisted on taking him; and the other continuing as resolutely to oppose it, a short debate arose, which terminated in a separation, whereby these two holy men, who had for several years been companions in the ministry, and with united endeavours propagated the gospel of the Son of God, now took different provinces: Barnabas with his kinsman sailed to his own country, Cyprus; and Paul, accompanied by Silas, travelled to the churches of Syria and Cilicia.

After this separation from St. Paul, the sacred writings give us no account of St. Barnabas; nor are the ecclesiastical writers agreed among themselves with regard to the actions of this apostle after his sailing for Cyprus. This, however, seems to be certain, that he did not spend the whole remainder of his life in that island, but visited different parts of the world, preaching the glad tidings of the gospel, healing the sick, and working other miracles among the Gentiles. After long and painful travels, attended with different degrees of success in different places, he returned to Cyprus, his native country, where he suffered martyrdom in the following manner: Certain Jews coming from Syria and Salamis, where Barnabas was then preaching the gospel, being highly exasperated at his extraordinary success, fell upon him as he was disputing in the synagogue, dragged him out, and, after the most inhuman tortures, stoned him to death. His kinsman, John Mark, who was a spectator of this barbarous action, privately interred his body in a cave, where, it is said, it remained till the time of the emperor Zeno, in the year of Christ 485, when it was discovered, with St. Matthew's Gospel in Hebrew, written with his own hand, lying on his breast.

SAINT STEPHEN.

BOTH the Scriptures and the ancient writers are silent with regard to the birth, country, and parents of St. Stephen. Epiphanius is of opinion that he was one of the seventy disciples; but this is very uncertain. Our blessed Saviour appointed his seventy disciples to teach the doctrines, and preach the glad tidings, of the gospel; but it does not appear that St. Stephen and the six other first deacons had any particular designation before they were chosen for the service of the tables; and therefore St. Stephen could not have been one of our Lord's disciples, though he might have often followed him and listened to his discourses.

He was remarkably zealous for the cause of religion, and full of the Holy Ghost; working many wonderful miracles before the people, and pressing them with the greatest earnestness to embrace the doctrine of the gospel.

This highly provoked the Jews; and some of the synagogues of the freed-men of Cyrenia, Alexandria, and other places, entered into a dispute with him: but being unable to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake, they suborned false witnesses against him, to testify that they heard him blaspheme against Moses and against God. Nor did they stop here: they stirred up the people by their calumnies; so that they dragged him before the council of the nation, or great Sanhedrim, where they produced false witnesses against him, who deposed that they had heard him speak against the temple, and against the law, and affirm that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the holy place, and abolish the law of Moses. Stephen, supported by his own innocence, and an invisible power from on high, appeared undaunted in the midst of this assembly, and his countenance shone like that of an angel. When the high-priest asked him what he had to offer against the accusations laid to his charge, he answered in the following manner:—

Hearken unto me, ye descendants of Jacob: The Almighty, whose glory is from everlasting, appeared to our father Abraham, before he sojourned in Charran, even while he dwelt in Mesopotamia, commanding him to leave his country and relations, and retire

into a land which he would show him.

Abraham obeyed the divine mandate; he left the land of the Chaldeans, and pitched his tent in Charran; from whence, after his father was dead, he removed into Canaan, even the land you now inhabit; but he gave him no inheritance in this country, not even so much as to set his foot upon. He promised, indeed, he would give it him for a possession which should descend to his posterity, though at this time he had no child.

God also intimated to him that his seed should sojourn in a strange land, the people of which should make them bond-men, and treat them cruelly four hundred years; after which he would judge that nation, and bring out his people, who should serve him in this place. As an earnest of which he gave him the covenant of circumcision, and afterwards a son, whom Abraham circumcised the eighth day, calling his name Isaac; who begat Jacob, and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

But these, moved with envy, sold their brother Joseph into Egypt, where the Almighty protected him, delivered him from all his afflictions, endued him with wisdom, and gave him favour in the sight of Pharaoh, the monarch of Egypt, who made him governor both of his house and kingdom.

Soon after the exaltation of Joseph, the countries of Egypt and Canaan were afflicted with a terrible famine, and our fathers found no sustenance either for themselves or flocks. But as soon as Jacob heard the welcome tidings that there was corn in Egypt, he sent our fathers thither, to purchase bread for the famine of his household. And in their second journey thither Joseph made himself known to his brethren, and also informed Pharaoh of his country and relations. After which Joseph's father, with his whole house, consisting of threescore and ten souls, went down into Egypt, where both Jacob and our fathers died, and their remains were deposited in the sepulchre purchased by Abraham of Ephron the Hittite.

But as the time for fulfilling the promise made to Abraham approached, the people multiplied in Egypt, till another king arose, who was not acquainted with the merits of Joseph, and the great things he had done for that country. This prince used our fathers with cruelty, and artfully attempted to destroy all the male children. At this time Moses was born, and being exceeding fair, was nourished three months in his father's house; but as it was dangerous to conceal him there any

longer, he was hid among the flags on the bank of the river; when the daughter of Pharoah found him, and educated him as her own son.

Thus Moses became acquainted with all the learning of Egypt, and was mighty both in word and deed; but when he was forty years old he thought proper to visit his brethren, the children of Israel; and seeing an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, he assisted the suffering person, and slew the Egyptian, supposing that his brethren would have been persuaded that from his hand, with the assistance of the Almighty, they might expect deliverance: but they conceived no hopes of this kind.

The next day he again visited them, and seeing two of them striving together, he endeavoured to make them friends: Ye are brethren, said he to them; why do ye injure one another? But he who did his neighbour wrong, instead of listening to his advice, thrust him away, saying, By what authority art thou a judge of our actions? wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?

Moses, at this answer, fled from Egypt, and sojourned in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons. And at the end of forty years, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, out of the middle of a bush burning with fire; a sight which surprised Moses; and as he drew near to view more attentively so uncommon a sight, the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying, "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." At which Moses trembled, and turned aside his face. But the Lord said to him, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. I have seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt."

Thus was that Moses whom they refused sent by God to be a ruler and deliverer, by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. Accordingly he brought them out, after he had showed signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years. It is this Moses that told our fathers, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me. Him shall ye hear."

And this prophet is the same who was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; the same who received the lively oracles to give unto us; he whom our fathers would not obey,



Moses in the Land of Midian

but thrust him from them, and were desirous of returning to their state of bondage; commanding Aaron to make them gods to go before them; and pretending that they knew not what was become of Moses, who delivered them from the slavery of Egypt. They now made a calf, offered sacrifices to it, and rejoiced in the work of their own hands. On which the Almighty abandoned them, as the prophets have recorded. "O ye house of Israel, have you offered unto me slain beasts and sacrifices, by the space of forty years in the wilderness, Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan; figures which ye made, to worship them: I will carry you away beyond Babylon."

Our fathers were possessed of the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, being made according to the pattern Moses had seen in the mount. This tabernacle our fathers brought into the possession of the Gentiles, who were driven out by the Almighty, till the days of David, a favourite of the Most High, and who was desirous of finding a tabernacle for the God of Jacob; but Solomon built him a house.

We must not, however, think that the Almighty will reside in temples made with hands, as the prophet beautifully observed: "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me, saith the Lord, or where is the place of my rest? Hath not mine hand made all these things?'

Ye stiff-necked, ye uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye will for ever resist the Holy Ghost. Ye tread in the paths of your fathers; as they did, so do you still continue to do. Did not your fathers persecute every one of the prophets? did not they slay them who showed the coming of the Holy One, whom ye yourselves have betrayed and murdered? Ye have received the law by the disposition of angels, but never kept it.

At these words they were so highly enraged, that they gnashed their teeth against him. But Stephen, lifting up his eyes to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of Omnipotence. Upon which he said to the council, "I see the heavens open, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." This so greatly provoked the Jews, that they cried out with one voice, and stopped their ears, as if they had heard some dreadful blasphemy; and falling upon him, they dragged him out of the city, and stoned him to death. It was the custom of the Jews, on these occasions, for the witnesses to throw the first stone.

Whether they observed this particular at the martyrdom of Stephen is uncertain; but the evangelist tells us, that the witnesses were principally concerned in this action; for they stripped off their clothes, and laid them at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul, then a violent persecutor of the Christian church, but afterwards one of the most zealous preachers of the gospel.

Stephen, while they were man gling his body with stones, was praying to his heavenly Father for their pardon: "Lord," said he, "lay not this sin to their charge." And then calling on his dear Redeemer to receive his spirit, he yielded up his soul.

TIMOTHY.

TIMOTHY was a convert and disciple of St. Paul. He was born, according to some, at Lystra; or, according to others, at Derbe. His father was a Gentile, but his mother a Jewess, whose name was Eunice; and that of his grandmother, Lois.

These particulars are taken notice of because St. Paul commends their piety, and the good education which they had given Timothy. When St. Paul came to Derbe and Lystra, about the year of Christ 51 or 52, the brethren gave a very advantageous testimony of the piety and good disposition of Timothy; and the apostle would have him along with him; and he initiated him at Lystra, before he received him into his company. Timothy applied himself to labour with St. Paul in the business of the gospel, and did him very important services through the whole course of his preaching. It is not known when he was made a bishop; but it is believed that he received very early the imposition of the apostle's hands, and that in consequence of particular revelation or direction from the Holy Ghost. St. Paul calls him not only his dearly beloved son, but also his brother, the companion of his labours, and a man of God. He declared that there were none more united with him in heart and mind than Timothy.

This holy disciple accompanied St. Paul to Macedonia, to Philippi, to Thessalonica, to Berea; and when the apostle went from Berea he left



Timothy and Silas there to confirm the converts. When he came to Athens, he sent for Timothy to come thither to him; and when he was come, and had given him an account of the churches of Macedonia, St. Paul sent him back to Thessalonica, from whence he afterwards returned with Silas, and came to St. Paul at Corinth. There he continued with him; and the apostle mentions him with Silas at the beginning of the two epistles which he then wrote to the Thessalonians.

Some years after this, St. Paul sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, and gave Timothy orders to call at Corinth, to refresh the minds of the Corinthians, with regard to the truths which he had inculcated on them.

Some time after, writing to the same Corinthians, he recommends them to take care of Timothy, and send him back in peace; after which Timothy returned to St. Paul in Asia, who there stayed for him. They went together into Macedonia; and the apostle puts Timothy's name with his own before the second epistle to the Corinthians, which he wrote to them from Macedonia, about the middle of the year of Christ, 57. And he sends his recommendations to the Romans, in the letter which he wrote them from Corinth the same year.

When St. Paul returned from Rome in 64, he left Timothy at Ephesus, to take care of that church, of which he was the first bishop, as he is recognized by the council of Chalcedon. St. Paul wrote to him from Macedonia the first of the two epistles which are addressed to him. He recommends him to be more moderate in his austerities, and to drink a little wine, because of the weakness of his stomach, and his frequent infirmities. After the apostle came to Rome, in the year 65, being now very near his death, he wrote to him his second letter, which was full of the marks of his kindness and tenderness for this his dear disciple: and which is justly looked upon as the last will of St. Paul. He desires him to come to Rome to him before winter, and bring with him several things which St. Paul had left at Troas. If Timothy went to Rome, as it is probable he did, he must have been a witness of the martyrdom of this apostle, in the year of Christ 66.

If he did not die before the year 97, we can hardly doubt that he must be the pastor of the church of Ephesus to whom John writes in his Revelation; though the reproaches with which he seems to load him for his declension in having left his first love, do not seem to apply to so holy a man as Timo-

thy was; or else show that men eminently holy may fall from their steadfastness. Thus he speaks to him: "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars; and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted: Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." The greatest part of the interpreters think that these reproaches do not so much concern the person of Timothy as they do some members of his church whose zeal was grown cool. But others are persuaded that they may be applied to Timothy himself, who made ample amends, by the martyrdom which he suffered, for the reproaches mentioned by St. John in this place. It is supposed that Timothy had Onesimus for his successor.

TITUS.

TITUS was a Gentile by religion and birth, but converted by St. Paul who calls him his son. St. Jerome says, that he was St. Paul's interpreter: and that probably because he might write what St. Paul dictated, or explained in Latin what this apostle said in Greek, or rendered into Greek what St. Paul said in Hebrew or Syriac. St. Paul took him with him to Jerusalem, when he went thither in the year 51 of the vulgar era, about deciding the question which was then started, whether the converted Gentiles ought to be made subject to the ceremonies of the law? Some would then have obliged him to circumcise Titus; but neither he nor Titus would consent to it. Titus was sent by the same apostle to Corinth, upon occasion of some disputes which then divided the church. He was very well received by the Corinthians, and very much satisfied with their ready compli-



Death of Goliath.

1 Samt Ch XVII v 49

ance; but would receive nothing from them, imitating thereby the disinterestedness of his master.

From Corinth he went to St. Paul in Macedonia, and gave him an account of the state of the church at Corinth. A little while after the apostle desired him to return again to Corinth, to set things in order preparatory to his coming. Titus readily undertook this journey, and departed immediately, carrying with him St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. Titus was left to the care of the isle of Crete, about the 63rd year of Christ, when St. Paul was obliged to quit that island, in order to take care of the other churches. The following year he wrote to him, to desire that as soon as he should have sent Tychicus of Artemas to him for supplying his place in Crete, Titus would come to him to Nicopolis in Macedonia, or to Nicopolis in Epirus, upon the gulf of Ambracia, where the apostle intended to pass his winter.

The subject of this epistle is to represent to Titus what are the qualities that a bishop should be endued with. As the principal function which Titus was to exercise in the isle of Crete was to ordain elders, it was highly incumbent on him to make a discreet choice. The apostle also gives him a sketch, for the advice and instruction which he was to propound to all sorts of persons; to the aged, both men and women; to young people of each sex; to slaves or servants. He exhorts him to keep a strict authority over the Cretans; and to reprove them with severity, as being a people adicted to lying, wickedness, idleness and gluttony. And as many converted Jews were in the churches of Crete, he exhorts Titus to oppose their vain traditions and Jewish fables; and at the same time to show them that the observation of the legal ceremonies is no longer necessary; that the distinction of meat is now abolished, and that everything is pure and clean to those that are so themselves: he puts him in mind of exhorting the faithful to be obedient to temporal power; to avoid disputes, quarrels, and slander; to apply themselves to honest callings; and to shun the company of a heretic after the first and second admonition.

The epistle to Titus has always been acknowledged by the church. The Marcionites did not receive it, nor did the Basilidians, and some other heretics; but Titian, the head of the Encratites, received it, and preferred it before all the rest. It is not certainly known from what place it was written, nor by whom it was sent.

Titus was deputed to preach the

gospel in Dalmatia; and he was still there in the year 65, when the apostle wrote his second epistle to Timothy. He afterwards returned to Crete; whence, it is said, he propagated the gospel into the neighbouring islands. He died at the age of 94, and was buried in Crete. We are assured that the cathedral of the city of Candia is dedicated to his name; and that his head is preserved there entire. The Greeks keep his festival on the 25th of August, and the Latins on the 4th of January.

Joseph before Pharaoh.

THE

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY

BRIEFLY STATED,

AND

THE NEW TESTAMENT

PROVED TO BE GENUINE.

IN THREE JUDICIOUS AND EXCELLENT SERMONS.

BY P. DODDRIDGE, D.D.

SERMON I.

We have not followed cunningly devised fables. 2 Pet. i. 16.

IT is undoubtedly a glory to our age and country that the nature of moral virtue has been so clearly stated, and the practice of it so strongly enforced by the views of its native beauty and beneficial consequences both to private persons and society. Perhaps, in this respect, hardly any nation or time has equalled, certainly few, if any, have exceeded our own. Yet I fear I might add, there have been few ages or countries where vice has more generally triumphed, in its most audacious, and, in other respects, most odious forms.

This may well appear a surprising case; and it will surely be worth our while to inquire into the causes of so strange a circumstance. I cannot now enter into a particular detail of them. But I am persuaded none is more considerable than that unhappy disregard, either to the gospel in general, or to its most peculiar and essential truths, which is so visible amongst us, and which appears to be continually growing. It is plain that, like some of old who thought and professed themselves the wisest of mankind, or, in other words, the freest

thinkers of their age, multitudes among us have not liked to retain God and his truths in their knowledge; and it is therefore the less to be wondered at, if God has given them up to a reprobate mind; to the most infamous lusts and enormities; and to a depth of degeneracy which, while it is in part the natural consequence, is in part also the just but dreadful punishment of their apostasy from the faith. And I am persuaded that those who do indeed wish well to the cause of public virtue, as every true Christian most certainly does, cannot serve it more effectually than by endeavouring to establish men in the belief of the gospel in general, and to affect their hearts with its most distinguished truths.

The latter of these is our frequent employment, and is what I some time ago particularly attempted in a series of Discourses on the Power and Grace of the Redeemer: the former I shall now, by the Divine assistance, apply myself to on the present occasion. And I have chosen the words now before us as a proper introduction to such a design.

They do indeed peculiarly refer to the coming of our Lord, which the apostle represents as attested by that glory of which he was an eye-witness on the mount of transfiguration, and by that voice from heaven which he heard there; but the truth of these facts is evidently connected with that of the gospel in general. I am persuaded, therefore, you will think they are properly prefixed to a discourse on the general evidences of Christianity. And I hope, by the Divine assistance, to propose them at this time in such a manner as shall convince you that the apostles had reason to say, and that we also have reason to repeat it, "we have not followed cunningly devised fables."

I have often touched on this subject occasionally, but I think it my duty at present to insist something more largely upon it. You easily apprehend, that it is a matter of the highest importance, being indeed no other than the great foundation of all our eternal hopes. While so many are daily attempting to destroy this foundation, it is possible that those of you, especially, who are but entering on the world, may be called out to give a reason of the hope that is in you: I would therefore, with the apostle, be concerned, that you may be ready to do it. It may fortify you against the artifices by which the unwary are often deceived and ensnared, and may possibly enable you to put to silence their foolishness. At least it will be for the satisfaction of your own

minds, to have considered the matter seriously, and to be conscious to yourselves, that you are not Christians merely by education or example, as, had you been born elsewhere, you might have been Pagans or Mahometans; but that you are so upon rational evidence, and because (as the sacred historian expresses it) you know the certainty of those things in which you have been instructed.

To open and vindicate the proof of Christianity in all its extent, would be the employment of many discourses; nor would it on the whole be proper to attempt it here. All that I now intend here is, to give you a summary view of the most considerable arguments in that which seems to me their most proper and natural connexion; so that you may be able to judge of them better than you could possibly do by a few scattered remarks, or by the most copious enlargement on any single branch of them alone. I shall endeavour to dispose these hints so as that they may be some guide to those whose leisure and abilities may lead them to a more ample and curious inquiry; that they may not be entangled in so complex an argument, but may proceed in an orderly manner. And if any of you, my friends, desire a more particular information on any of those heads, which I now but briefly suggest, you may depend upon it, that faithful ministers of every denomination will think it an important part of their duty to give you all the private assistance they can. It is my hearty prayer, that God would enable me to plead his cause with success: that he would open your understandings to receive these things, and to strengthen your memories to retain them; that you may not be like children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but may be strong in faith, giving glory to God; that your faith being more and more established, it may appear that the tree is watered at the roots; and that all your other graces may grow and flourish in an equal proportion.

But before I proceed, I must desire you to observe that there is no proof in the world so satisfactory to the true Christian, as to have felt the transforming power of the gospel on his own soul. As that illiterate man whose eyes were miraculously opened by Christ, when he was questioned by the Jewish Sanhedrim, who endeavoured with all their sophistry to prove Christ an impostor, answered with great steadiness and constancy, and with a great deal of reason too, "This one thing I know, that whereas I

was blind, now I see," so the most unlearned of the disciples of Jesus, having found his soul enlightened and sanctified, and felt his heart so effectually wrought upon, as to bring him home to his duty, his God, and his happiness, by the constraining power of the gospel, will despise a thousand subtle objections which may be urged against it; and though the cross of Christ be to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, yet with this experience of its saving energy, he will honour it, in the midst of all their contempt and ridicule, as the power of God, and the wisdom of God. In this sense, though the miraculous communication of the Spirit be ceased, he that believeth hath still the witness in himself; and while the Spirit beareth witness with his spirit that he is a child of God, he cannot doubt, but that the word by which he was, as it were, begotten unto him, is indeed a divine and incorruptible seed.

And perhaps there are certain seasons of pressing temptation, in which the most learned, as well as the most illiterate, Christian will find this the surest anchor of his hope.

Nevertheless it must be acknowledged that this glorious kind of evidence is like the white stone mentioned in the Revelation, on which there was a new name written, which no man knew but he who received it. God has therefore made other provision for the honour and support of his gospel, by furnishing it with a variety of proof, which may with undiminished, and indeed with growing conviction, be communicated from one to another. And we should be greatly wanting in gratitude to him, in zeal for a Redeemer's kingdom, and in charitable concern for the conversion of those who reject the gospel, as well as for the edification of those who embrace it, should we wholly overlook these arguments, or neglect to acquaint ourselves with them. This is the evidence which I am now to propose; and I desire you would hear it with becoming attention. I speak to you as rational creatures; judge ye of the reasonableness of what I shall say.

In prosecution of this great design, I shall endeavour more particularly to show you, that if we take the matter on a general survey, it will appear highly probable, that such a scheme of doctrines and precepts as we find Christianity to be, should indeed have been a Divine revelation—and then, that if we examine into the external evidence of it, we shall find it certain, in fact, that it was so, and that it had its original from above.

First, let me show, *That taking the matter merely in theory, it will appear highly probable that such a system as the gospel should be indeed a divine revelation.*

To evidence this, I would more particularly prove—that the state of mankind was such, as greatly to need a revelation—that there seems, from the light of nature, encouragement to hope that God should grant one—that it is reasonable to believe, if any were made, it should be so introduced and transmitted as we are told Christianity was; and that its general nature and substance should be such as we find that of the gospel is. If these particulars are made out, here will be a strong presumptive evidence, that the gospel is from God; and we shall have opened a fair way toward the more direct proof which I principally intend.

1. *The case of mankind is naturally such as greatly to need a divine revelation.*

I speak not here of man in his original state; though even then, as many have largely shown, some instruction from above seemed necessary to inform him of many particulars which it was highly expedient that he should immediately know: but I speak of him in the degenerate condition in which he now so evidently lies, by whatever means he was brought into it. It is an easy thing to make florid encomiums on the perfection of natural light, and to deceive unwary readers with an ambiguous term, which shall sometimes signify all that appears even to the divine understanding, and sometimes no more than the meanest of the human race may, or than they actually do attain; but let fact speak, and the controversy will soon be determined. I appeal to all that are acquainted with the records of antiquity, or that have any know ledge of the most credible accounts of the present state of those countries where Christianity is unknown, whether it is not too obvious a truth, that the whole heathen world has lain, and still lies, in wickedness. Have not incomparably the greater part of them been perpetually bewildered in their religious notions and practices, vastly differing from each other, and almost equally differing on all sides from the probable appearances of truth and reason? Is anything so wild as not to have been believed, anything so infamous as not to have been practised, by them; while they have not only pretended to justify it by reason, but have consecrated it as a part of their religion? To this very day,

what are the discoveries of new nations in the American or African world, but, generally speaking, the opening of new scenes of enormity? Rapine, lust, cruelty, human sacrifices, and the most stupid idolatries, are, and, for aught I can find, always have been, the morality and religion of almost all the Pagan nations under heaven: and to say that there have still been some smothered sparks of reason within, which if cherished might have led them to truth and happiness, is only saying that they have been so much the more criminal, and therefore so much the more miserable.

But you live at home, and hear these things only by uncertain report. Look then around you, within the sphere of your own observation, and see the temper and character of the generality of those who have been educated in a Christian, and even in a Protestant country. Observe their ignorance and forgetfulness of the Divine Being, their impieties, their debaucheries, their fraud, their oppression, their pride, their avarice, their ambition, their unnatural insensibility of the wants and sorrows and interests of each other: and when you see how bad they generally are in the midst of so many advantages, judge by that of the probable state of those that want them. Judge, upon these views, whether a revelation be an unnecessary thing.

2. *There is from the light of nature considerable encouragement to hope that God would favour his creatures with so needful a blessing as a revelation appears*

That a revelation is in itself a possible thing, is evident beyond all shadow of a doubt. Shall not he that made man's mouth, who has given this wonderful faculty of discovering our sentiments, and communicating our ideas to each other, shall he not be able to converse with his rational creatures, and by sensible manifestations, or by inward impressions, to convey the knowledge of things which lie beyond the ken of their natural faculties, and yet may be highly conducive to their advantage? To own a God, and to deny him such a power, will be a notorious contradiction. But it may appear much more dubious whether he will please to confer such a favour on sinful creatures.

Now I acknowledge, that we could not certainly conclude he would ever do it; considering on the one hand, how justly they stood exposed to his final displeasure; and, on the other, what provision he had made by the frame of the human mind, and of nature around us, for

giving us such notices of himself as would leave us inexcusable if we either failed to know him, or to glorify him as God, as the apostle argues, *Rom.* i. 20. Nevertheless, methinks we should have had something of this kind to hope from considering God as the indulgent Father of his creatures; from observing the tender care which he takes of us, and the liberal supply which he grants for the support of the animal life: especially from the provision which he has made for man, considered as a guilty and calamitous creature, by the medicinal and healing virtues which he has given to many of the productions of nature, which in a state of perfect rectitude and happiness man would never have needed. This is a circumstance which seemed strongly to intimate that he would sometime or another graciously provide some remedy to heal men's minds; and that he would interpose to instruct them in his own nature, in the manner in which he is to be served, and in the final treatment which they may expect from him. And, I think, such an apprehension seems very congruous to the sentiments of the generality of mankind, as appears from the many pretences to divine revelation which have often been made, and the readiness of multitudes to receive them on very slender proofs: this shows how naturally men expect some such considerate interposition of the Deity; a thought which might farther be confirmed by some remarkable passages of heathen writers, which I have not now time particularly to mention.

3. We may easily conclude, *That if a revelation were given, it would be introduced and transmitted in such a manner as Christianity is said to have been.*

It is exceeding probable, for instance, that it should be taught, either by some illustrious person sent down from a superior world, or at least by a man of eminent wisdom and piety, who should himself have been not only a teacher, but an example, of universal goodness. In order to this, it seems probable that he would be led through a series of calamity and distress; since otherwise he would not have been a pattern of the virtues which adorn adversity, and are peculiar to it. And it might also have been expected, that in the extremity of his distresses the blessed God, whose messenger he was, should in some extraordinary manner have interposed, either to preserve or recover him from death.

It is, moreover, exceeding probable that such a person, and perhaps

also they who were at first employed as his messengers to the world, should be endowed with a power of working miracles: both to awaken men's attention, and to prove a divine mission, and the consequent truth of their doctrines; some of which might, perhaps, not be capable of any other kind of proof; or, if they were, it is certain that no method of arguing is so short, so plain, and so forcible, and on the whole so well suited to the conviction, and probably the reformation of mankind, as a course of evident, repeated, and uncontrolled miracles. And such a method of proof is especially adapted to the populace, who are incomparably the greater part of mankind, and for whose benefit, we may assure ourselves, a revelation would chiefly be designed. I might add, it was no way improbable, though not in itself certain, that a dispensation should open gradually on the world; and that the most illustrious messenger of God to men should be ushered in by some predictions which should raise a great expectation of his appearance, and have an evident accomplishment in him.

As for the propagation of a religion so introduced, it seems no way improbable, that having been thus established in its first age, it should be transmitted to future generations by credible testimony, as other important facts are. It is certain that affairs of the utmost moment which are transacted amongst men, depend on testimony; on this voyages are undertaken, settlements made, and controversies decided; controversies, on which not only the estates, but the lives of men depend. And though it must be owned that such an historical evidence is not equally convincing with miracles which are wrought before our own eyes, yet it is certain it may rise to such a degree as to exclude all reasonable doubt. And I know not why we should expect that the evidence of a revelation should be such as universally to compel the immediate assent of all to whom it is offered. To me it seems much more likely that it should be so adjusted as to be a kind of touchstone to the tempers and characters of men; capable, indeed, of giving ample satisfaction to the diligent and candid inquirer, yet attended with some circumstances from whence the captious and perverse might take occasion to cavil and object. Such might we suppose the evidence of the revelation would be, and such it is maintained that of Christianity is. The teachers of it say, and undertake to prove, that it was thus introduced, thus established, and thus transmitted; and we trust that this is a

strong presumption in its favour; especially as we can add:—

4. *The main doctrines contained in the gospel are of such a nature as we might in general suppose those of a divine revelation would be—rational, practical, and sublime.*

One would imagine, that in a revelation of religion from God, the great principles of natural religion should be clearly asserted, and strongly maintained: such, I mean, as the existence, the unity, the perfection, and the providence of God; the essential and immutable difference between moral good and evil: the obligation we are under to the various branches of virtue, whether human, social, or divine; the value and immortality of the soul; and the rewards and punishments of a future state. One would easily conclude, that all these particulars must be contained in it; and that, upon the whole, it should appear calculated to form men's minds to a proper temper, rather than to amuse them with curious speculations.

It might, indeed, be farther supposed, and probably concluded, that such a revelation would contain some things, which could not have been learnt from the highest improvements of natural light: and considering the infinite and unfathomable nature of the blessed God, it would be more than probable, that many things might be hinted at and referred to which our feeble faculties should not be able fully to comprehend. Yet we should expect to find these introduced in a practical view, as directing us to duties before unknown, or suggesting powerful motives to make us resolute and constant in the discharge of the rest; particularly on what terms pardon and happiness might be expected by sinful creatures. As for ceremonial and positive institutions, we would imagine, at least in the most perfect state of the revelation, that they should be but few, and those few plainly subservient to the great purposes of practical religion.

I shall only add, that forasmuch as pride appears to be the most reigning corruption of the human mind, and the source of numberless irregularities; it is exceeding probable that a divine revelation should be calculated to humble the fallen creature, and bring it to a sense of its guilt and weakness; and the more evidently that tendency appears, other things being equal, the greater reason there is to believe that the original of such a scheme is from above.

Your own thoughts have un-

doubtedly preceded me in the application of these characters to the Christian revelation. The justice of that application I must not now illustrate at large. But I must beg leave to advance one remark, which will conclude what I have to say on this head; which is, that as the Christian system is undoubtedly worthy of God, so, considering the manner in which it is said to have been introduced (separate from the evidence of the facts, which is afterwards to be considered), it is very difficult to imagine from whom else it could have proceeded.

I will readily allow, that neither the reasonableness of its doctrines, nor the purity of its morals, will alone prove its divine original; since it is possible the reason of one man may discover that which the reason of another approves, as being, in itself considered, either true in theory or useful in practice. But this is not all: for in the present case it is evident, that the first teachers of Christianity professed that they were taught it by Divine revelation, and that they were empowered by God with miraculous endowments for the confirmation of it. Now, if it were not indeed so as they professed, how can we account for so strange a phenomenon, as such a doctrine introduced with such pretences? If it were not from God, whence was it? From good or evil angels, or from men? Wicked creatures, as our Lord intimates, *Matt.* xii. 25, would never conceive and propagate so excellent a scheme; nor can we imagine that holy angels, or righteous men, would thus be found false witnesses of God, or have attempted to support the cause of religion and truth by such impious and notorious falsehoods as their pretensions must have been, if they were falsehoods at all.

And thus much for the first branch of the argument: if you consider the Christian scheme only in theory, it appears highly probable; since a revelation was so much needed, might so reasonably be expected, and if it were ever given, would, so far as we can judge, be thus introduced, and be in the main attended with such internal characteristics. And though we have not as yet expressly proved that the gospel was introduced in such a manner as the defenders of it assert, yet it would be strangely unaccountable that so admirable a system of truth and duty should be advanced by the prince of darkness and the children of wickedness; as it must have been, if the persons first employed in the propagation of it were not endowed with power from on high.

To embrace the gospel is so safe, and on the whole so comfortable a thing, that I think a wise man would deliberately venture his all upon it, though nothing more could be offered for its confirmation. But, blessed be God, we have a great deal more to offer in this important cause; and can add with still greater confidence, that it is not only in theory thus probable, but:—

Secondly, *That it is in fact certain, that Christianity is indeed a divine Revelation.*

Here I confess the chief stress is to be laid; and therefore I shall insist more largely on this branch of the argument, and endeavour by the Divine assistance, to prove the certainty of this great fact. You will naturally apprehend, that I speak only of what is commonly called a moral certainty: but I need speak of no more; for in many cases, such kind of evidence gives the mind as ample and as rational a satisfaction as it may find even in some supposed mathematical demonstrations: since there it is possible, at least in a long deduction of particulars, for the most sagacious of mankind to fall into a mistake.

Now, in order to settle this grand point as clearly as I can, I think it may be proper to prove—

I. That the books of the New Testament, as they are now in your hands, may be depended upon as written by the first preachers and publishers of Christianity. And,

II. That from hence it will certainly follow that what they assert is true, and that the religion they teach brings along with it such evidences of a divine authority as may most justly recommend it to our acceptance.

Each of these heads might furnish out matter for many volumes; but it is my business to hint at the most obvious and important thoughts by which they may briefly be illustrated and confirmed.

I. I am to prove to you, *That the books of the New Testament now in your hands were written by the first preachers and publishers of Christianity.*

You see I confine the present proof to the books of the New Testament. Not that I think the authority of the Old to be suspected, or the use of it by any means to be despised. God forbid! it is an invaluable treasure, which demands our daily delightful and thankful perusal, and is capable of being defended in a manner which I am persuaded its subtilest enemies will never be able to answer. But the nature of my

present argument, and the limits of my time, oblige me at present to waive the proof of it any farther than as it is implied in, and dependent upon, what I have more immediately in view.

In the process of the discourse, though I shall studiously avoid any ostentation of learning; yet it will be absolutely necessary to assert some things which cannot certainly be known without some little acquaintance with ancient writers. You cannot, most of you, be supposed to have formed such an acquaintance; but I take it for granted, you will readily believe that I will not lie for God, nor talk deceitfully for him. I shall say nothing of this kind but what I know to be contained in those writings; and you may assure yourselves that no man of common sense, whatever his moral or religious character were, would venture in such an age as this publicly to cite passages as from authors in every one's hands which he cannot prove to be contained in them.

Having premised these things I go on to the argument, and shall advance in it by the following degrees: I shall prove—that Christianity is an ancient religion—that there was such a person as Jesus of Nazareth crucified at Jerusalem above seventeen hundred years ago— that the first preachers of this religion wrote books which went by the name of those that now make up the volume of our New Testament—that they are preserved in the original to the present times—and that the translation of them, which you have, is in the main such as may be depended upon as faithful. And then I shall have clearly made out what I proposed in this first part.

1. It is certain, *That Christianity is not a new religion, but that it was maintained by great multitudes quickly after the time in which Jesus is said to have appeared.*

That there was, considerably more than sixteen hundred years ago, a body of men who went by the name of Christians, is almost as evident as that a race of men was then existing in the world; nor do I know that any have ever been wild and confident enough to dispute it. If any should for argument's sake question it, they might quickly be convinced by a considerable number of Christian writers, who lived in the same, or the next age, and mention it as a thing notoriously certain that Christianity was then of some standing in the world; some of them giving directions and exhortations to their brethren, and others forming apologies to their enemies, for which

there could not otherwise have been the least foundation. We might have acquiesced in their testimony, had it been alone; but it is confirmed by that of Jews and heathens, who, by their early invectives against the Christians, do most evidently prove that there was such a body of men in the world. The most considerable Roman historians who lived in this age and wrote of it are Tacitus and Suetonius, who both published their writings above sixteen hundred years ago; and they are always and very justly appealed to as pregnant witnesses upon this occasion. For Tacitus assures us, "that in Nero's days," who began his reign about twenty years after the death of Christ, "there was a vast multitude of Christians, not only in Judea, but at Rome too; against whom Nero raised a persecution, attended with such circumstances of ignominy and cruelty as moved the compassion even of their enemies;" of which number this historian evidently was. Nay, he plainly intimates that this was not the first attempt which had been made to crush them; though this attempt was so early as we have heard. His contemporary, Suetonius, in his more concise manner, attests the same. And Pliny, the intimate friend and correspondent of both, being employed in Trajan's time to persecute the Christians, writes an account of them to that emperor, which, though commonly known, must be mentioned, as it is so highly important. After having spoken very favourably of their moral character, he adds, "that many of both sexes, and of every age and rank, were infected with this superstition," as he thinks fit to express it; "that it was gone into the villages, as well as the cities; and that, till he began to put the laws in execution against them, the temples of the heathen deities were almost deserted, and hardly any could be found who would buy victims for them." It might be added, that Marcus Antoninus, who wrote a few years after Pliny, mentions the Christians, "as examples of a resolute and obstinate contempt of death:" and it is generally supposed they are the Galileans whom Epictetus speaks of, "as those whom practice had taught to despise the rage of their armed enemies."

I shall dismiss this head with observing, that it tends greatly to the confirmation of Christianity that each of these celebrated and ancient Pagan writers, at the same time they attest the existence of such a body of men professing it, informs us of those extreme persecutions which they underwent in the very infancy

of their religion; a fact also farther apparent from the apologies addressed by the Christians to their persecutors, which, whatever imperfections may attend the manner in which some of them are written, appear to me some of the most valuable remains of antiquity (the sacred records only excepted), especially those of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Minutius Felix. This fundamental point is then abundantly made out; that there were vast numbers of men, very quickly after the time when Jesus is said to have appeared upon earth, who professed his religion, and chose to endure the greatest extremities, rather than they would abandon it. From hence it will be easy to show:—

2. *That there was certainly such a person as Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified at Jerusalem, when Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor there.*

It can never be imagined, that multitudes of people should take their name from Christ, and sacrifice their lives for their adherence to him, even in the same age in which he is said to have lived, if they had not been well assured there was such a person. Now several of the authors I have mentioned plainly assert that the Christians were denominated from Christ; nay, Tacitus expressly adds, "that he was put to death under Pontius Pilate, who was procurator of Judea, in the reign of Tiberius." And it was well known, that the primitive Christian apologists often appeal to the acts of Pilate, or the memoirs of his government (which he, according to the custom of other procurators, transmitted to Rome), as containing an account of these transactions; and as the appeal was made to those who had the command of the public records we may assure ourselves such testimonies were then extant. But it is a fact which our enemies never denied: they owned it; they even gloried in it, and upbraided the Christians with it. The Jews, therefore, in some of their earliest writings since those times, call Jesus by the ignominious name of "the man who was hanged, or crucified," and his followers, "the servants of the crucified person." And Lucian rallies them for deserting the pompous train of the heathen deities, to worship one whom he impiously calls a crucified impostor. Spartian also assures us that the emperor Alexander Severus entertained such high thoughts of Christ, "that he would have admitted him into the number of his deities, and have built a temple to

him, had not his Pagan subjects vigorously opposed it." And Porphyry, though an inveterate enemy to Christianity, not only allowed there was such a person, but honoured him "as a most wise and pious man, approved by the gods, and taken up into heaven for his distinguished virtues." I might add a great deal more on this head; but it already appears as certain as ancient history can make it, and incomparably more certain than most of the facts which it has transmitted to us, that there was at the time commonly supposed such a person as Christ, who professed himself a divine teacher, and who gathered many disciples, by whom his religion was afterwards published in the world.

3. It is also certain, *That the first publishers of this religion wrote books which contained an account of the life and doctrine of Jesus their master, and which went by the name of those that now make up our New Testament.*

It was in the nature of things exceeding probable that what they had seen and heard they would declare and publish to the world in writing; considering how common books were in the age and countries in which they taught; and of how great importance an acquaintance with the history and doctrine of Christ was to the purposes which they so strenuously pursued: but we have much more than such a presumptive evidence.

The greatest adversaries of Christianity must grant, that we have books of great antiquity, written some fourteen, others fifteen, and some sixteen hundred years ago; in which mention is made of the life of Christ, as written by many, and especially by four of his disciples, who by way of eminence are called the Evangelists. Great pains indeed have been taken to prove that some spurious pieces were published under the names of the apostles, containing the history of these things; but surely this must imply, that it was a thing known and allowed that the apostles did write some narrations of this kind; as counterfeit coin implies some true money, which it is designed to represent. And I am sure he must be very little acquainted with the ancient ecclesiastical writers who does not know that the primitive Christians made a very great difference between those writings which we call the canonical books of the New Testament, and others; which plainly shows, that they did not judge of writings merely by the names of their pretended authors,

but inquired with an accuracy becoming the importance of those pretences. The result of this inquiry was, the four Gospels, the Acts, thirteen Epistles of Paul, one of Peter, and one of John, were received upon such evidence, that Eusebius, a most accurate and early critic in these things, could not learn that they had ever been disputed; and afterwards the remaining books of the New Testament, Hebrews, James, the Second of Peter, the Second and Third of John, Jude, and the Revelation, were admitted as genuine, and added to the rest; though some circumstances attending them rendered their authority for awhile a little dubious. On the whole it is plain, the primitive Christians were so satisfied in the authority of these sacred books, that they speak of them not only as credible and authentic, but as equal to the oracles of the Old Testament, as divinely inspired, as the words of the Spirit, as the law and organ of God, and as the rule of faith, which cannot be contradicted without great guilt; with many other expressions of the like kind, which often occur in their discourses. To which I may add, that in some of their councils the New Testament was placed on a throne, to signify their concern that all their controversies and actions might be determined and regulated by it.

On the whole then you see, that the primitive church did receive certain pieces which bore the same titles with the books of our New Testament. Now I think it is evident they were as capable of judging whether a book was written by Matthew, John, or Paul, as an ancient Roman could be of determining whether Horace, Tully, or Livy wrote those which go under their names. And I am sure the interest of the former was so much more concerned in the writings of the apostles, than that of the latter in the compositions of the poets, orators, or even their historians; that there is reason to believe they would take much greater care to inform themselves fully in the merits of the case, and to avoid being imposed upon by artifice and fiction. Let me now show:—

4. *That the books of the New Testament have been preserved in the main uncorrupted, to the present time, in the original language in which they were written.*

This is a matter of vast importance, and, blessed be God, it is attended with proportionable evidence, an evidence in which the hand of Providence has been indeed

remarkably seen; for I am confident that there is no other ancient book in the world which may so certainly and so easily be proved to be authentic.

And here I will not argue merely from the piety of the primitive Christians, and the heroic resolution with which they chose to endure the greatest extremities rather than they would deliver up their Bibles, (though that be a consideration of some evident weight); but shall entreat you to consider the utter impossibility of corrupting them. From the first ages, they were received and read in the churches as a part of their public worship, just as Moses and the Prophets were in the Jewish synagogues; they were presently spread far and wide, as the boundaries of the church were increased; and were early translated into other languages, of which translations some remain to this day. Now when this was the case, how could they possibly be adulterated? Is it a thing to be supposed or imagined, that thousands and millions of people should have come together from distant countries; and that with all their diversities of language and customs, and I may add, of sentiments too, they should have agreed on corrupting a book which they all acknowledged to be the rule of their faith and their manners, and the great charter by which they held their eternal hopes? It were madness to believe it; especially when we consider what numbers of heretics appeared in the very infancy of the church, who all pretended to build their notions on Scripture, and most of them appealed to it as the final judge of controversies. Now it is certain, that these different parties of professing Christians were a perpetual guard upon each other, and rendered it impossible for one party to practise grossly on the sacred books without the discovery and the clamour of the rest.

Nor must I omit to remind you, that in every age, from the apostles' time to our own, there have been numberless quotations made from the books of the New Testament; and a multitude of commentaries in various languages, and some of very ancient date, have been written upon them: so that if the books themselves were lost, I believe they might in a great measure, if not entirely, be recovered from the writings of others. And one might venture to say, that if all the quotations which have ever been made from all the ancient writers now remaining in Europe, were to be amassed together, the bulk of them would be by no means comparable to that of the quotations taken from the New Testament alone. So that a man might

with a much better face dispute whether the writings ascribed to Homer, Demosthenes, Virgil, or Cæsar, be in the main such as they left them, than he could question it concerning Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, James, and Paul, whether they are in the main so.

I say in the main, because we readily allow that the hand of a printer or of a transcriber might chance in some places to insert one letter or word for another; and the various readings of this, as well as of all other ancient books, prove that this has sometimes happened. Nevertheless, those various readings are generally of so little importance, that he who can urge them as an objection against the assertion we are now maintaining, must have little judgment or little integrity; and, indeed, after those excellent things which have been said on the subject by many defenders of Christianity, if he have read their writings, he must have little modesty too.

Since, then, it appears that the books of the New Testament, as they now stand in the original, are, without any material alteration, such as they were when they came from the hands of the persons whose names they bear, nothing remains to complete this part of the argument, but to show—

5. *That the translation of them now in your hands may be depended upon, as agreeable to the original in all things most material.*

This a fact of which the generality of you are not capable of judging immediately, yet it is a matter of great importance; it is therefore a very great pleasure to me to think what ample evidence you may find another way, to make your minds as easy on this head as you could reasonably wish them; I mean by the concurrent testimony of others, in circumstances in which you cannot imagine they would unite to deceive you.

There are, to be sure, very few of us, whose office it is publicly to preach the gospel, who have not examined this matter with care, and who are not capable of judging in so easy a case. I believe you have seen few in the place where I now stand, who could not have told you, as I now solemnly do, that on a diligent comparison of our translation with the original, we find that of the New Testament (and I might also add, that of the Old), in the main faithful and judicious. You know, indeed, that we do not scruple on some occasions to animadvert upon it; but you also know, that these remarks affect not the fundamentals of religion, and seldom

reach any farther than the beauty of a figure, or at most the connexion of an argument. Nay I can confidently say, that, to the best of my knowledge and remembrance, as there is no copy of the Greek, so neither is there any translation of the New Testament, which I have seen, whether ancient or modern, how defective and faulty soever, from which all the principal facts and doctrines of Christianity might not be learnt so far as the knowledge of them is necessary to salvation, or even to some considerable degrees of edification in piety. Nor do I except from this remark even that most erroneous and corrupt version published by the English Jesuits at Rheims, which is undoubtedly one of the worst that ever appeared in our language.

But I desire not, that, with respect to our own translation of the New Testament, a matter of so great moment as the fidelity of it should rest on my testimony alone, or entirely on that of any of my brethren, for whose integrity and learning you may have the greatest and justest esteem. I rejoice to say, that this is a head on which we cannot possibly deceive you, if we were ever so desirous to do it. And indeed, in this respect that is our advantage which in others is our great calamity; I mean, the diversity of our religious opinions. It is certain, that wheresoever there is a body of dissenters from the public establishment, who do yet agree with their brethren of that establishment in the use of the same translation, though they are capable of examining it, and judging of it; there is as great evidence as could reasonably be desired, that such a translation is in the main right; for if it were in any considerable argument corrupted, most of the other debates would quickly lose themselves in this; and though such dissenters had all that candour, tenderness, and respect for their fellow Christians, which I hope we shall always endeavour to maintain, yet they would no doubt think themselves obliged in conscience to bear a warm and loud testimony against so crying an abomination; as they would another day appear free from the guilt of a confederacy to poison the public fountains, and destroy the souls of men. But we make no complaint on this subject; we all unite in bearing our testimony to the oracles of God, as delivered in our own language. Oh, that we were equally united in regulating our doctrine and our discipline, our worship and our practice by them!

You see then on the whole, how much reason there is to believe,

"that the books of the New Testament, as they are now in your hands, were written by those whose names they bear, even the first preachers and publishers of Christianity."

This is the grand point; and from hence it will follow, by a train of easy and natural consequences, that the gospel is most certainly true: but that is a topic of argument abundantly sufficient to furnish out matter for another discourse. May God command his blessing on what has been already laid before us, that through the operation of the Spirit it may be useful for establishing our regard to the Scripture and for confirming our faith in that Almighty Redeemer, who is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last; whom to know is life everlasting, and in whom to believe is the great security of our eternal salvation! Amen.

SERMON II.

THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY DEDUCED FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT ALLOWED TO BE GENUINE.

We have not followed cunningly devised fables. 2 Pet. i. 16.

WHEN we are addressing ourselves to an audience of professing Christians, I think we may reasonably take it for granted, in the main course of our ministry, that they believe the truth of the gospel, and may argue with them on that supposition. To be ever laying the foundation, would be the part of an unwise builder, and be greatly detrimental to your edification and comfort, and I may add to our own. Nevertheless, Christians, we do not desire that you should take it merely upon our word that your religion is divine and your Scriptures inspired. We desire that your faith as well as your worship should be a reasonable service; and wish that, in this respect, all the Lord's people were as prophets; that as every Christian is in his sphere set for the defence of the gospel, each might in some measure be able to assert its truth, and, if possible, to convince gainsayers. Therefore, as we are often hinting at the principal arguments on which this sacred cause is established (established, I trust, so firmly that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it), so I thought it might be agreeable and useful, on this occasion, to state them a little more largely in their proper connexion and mutual dependence. And I chose rather to do it, as these sermons are especially intended for young people, who, in an age in which infidelity so much abounds, can hardly expect to pass through the world, if they are called to converse much in it, without some attacks on their faith; which may be very dangerous, if they are not provided with some armour of proof against them. It is indeed (as I before observed), above all things to be desired that the heart may be established with grace; for we are then more secure from the danger of forgetting God's precepts, when they have been the blessed means of quickening us to a divine life. Yet as other arguments have their use,

and in some degree their necessity too, I shall go on briefly to propose them.

I beg, therefore, that you would renew your attention, while I resume the thread of my discourse, in an entire dependence on the blessed Spirit by whom the gospel was at first revealed and confirmed, to add success to this humble attempt for its service, and for your edification.

I am now showing you that Christianity, which before appeared in theory probable and rational, has in fact a convincing evidence not only that it may be, but that it certainly is, true; as it is certain, that the New Testament as now in your hands is genuine, and as it may with great evidence be argued from this that the gospel is a revelation from God. The first of these points I have endeavoured to prove at large; and without repeating what I said in confirmation of it, I now proceed to show—

2. *That from allowing the New Testament to be genuine, it will certainly follow that Christianity is a divine Revelation.*

And here a man is at first ready to be lost in the multiplicity of arguments which surround him. It is very easy to find proofs; but difficult to range and dispose them in such an order as best to illustrate and confirm each other. Now I choose to offer them in the following series, which seems to me the most natural, and perhaps may be most intelligible to you.

The authors of the books contained in the New Testament were certainly capable of judging concerning the truth of the facts they attested;—their character, so far as we can judge of it by their writings, renders them worthy of regard;—and they were under no temptation to attempt to impose on the world by such a story as they have given us, if it had been false: so that, considering all things, there is no reason to believe they would attempt it; but if they had, they must probably have perished in the attempt, and could never have gained credit in the world had their testimony been false. Nevertheless, it is certain in fact that they did gain credit and succeed in a most amazing manner against all opposition. It is certain therefore that the facts they assert were true; and if they were true, that it was reasonable for their contemporaries, and is reasonable for us, to receive the gospel as a divine revelation; especially if we consider what has happened in the world for the confirmation of it, since it was first propagated by them. This is the conclusion to which I was to lead you; and I

beg you would seriously consider each of the steps by which we arrive at it.

1. It is exceeding evident, *That the writers of the New Testament certainly knew whether the facts they asserted were true or false.*

And this they must have known for this plain reason: because they tell us they did not trust merely to the report, even of persons whom they thought most credible; but were present themselves when several of the most important facts happened, and so received them on the testimony of their own senses. On this St. John, in his epistle, lays a very great and reasonable stress: That which we have seen with our eyes, and that not by a sudden glance, but which we have attentively looked upon, and which even our hands have handled of the word of life—*i.e.* of Christ and his gospel—declare we unto you.

Let the common sense of mankind judge here. Did not Matthew and John certainly know whether they had personally and familiarly conversed with Jesus of Nazareth, or not? whether he had chosen them for his constant attendants and apostles? whether they had seen him heal the sick, dispossess devils, and raise the dead? and whether they themselves had received from him such miraculous endowments as they say he bestowed upon them; Did not they know, whether he fell into the hands of his enemies, and was publicly put to death, or not? Did not John know, whether he saw him expiring on the cross, or not? and whether he received from him the dying charge which he records? Did he not know, whether he saw him wounded in the side with a spear, or not? and whether he did or did not see that effusion of blood and water, which was an infallible argument of his being really dead? concerning which, it being so material a circumstance, he adds, He that saw it bare record, and he knoweth that he saith true; *i.e* that it was a case in which he could not possibly be deceived. And with regard to Christ's resurrection, did he not certainly know, whether he saw our Lord again and again? and whether he handled his body, that he might be sure it was not a mere phantom? What one circumstance of his life could he certainly know, if he were mistaken in this?

Did not Luke know, whether he was in the ship with Paul, when that extraordinary wreck happened, by which they were thrown ashore on the island of Melita, or Malta? Did he not know, whether, while they were lodged together in the

governor's house, Paul miraculously healed one of the family, and many other diseased persons in the island, as he positively asserts that he did?

Did not Paul certainly know, whether Christ appeared to him on the way to Damascus, or not? whether he was blind, and afterwards, on the prayer of a fellow-disciple, received his sight? or was that a circumstance in which there could be room for mistake? Did he not know whether he received such extraordinary revelations and extraordinary powers as to be able, by the imposition of his hands or by the words of his mouth, to work miracles, and even to convey supernatural endowments to others?

To add one more: did not Peter know whether he saw the glory of Christ's transfiguration, and heard that voice to which he expressly refers, when he says in the text, We have not followed cunningly devised fables, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty when there came such a voice to him; and this voice we heard?

Now Matthew, John, Luke, Paul, and Peter, are by far the most considerable writers of the New Testament; and I am sure, when you reflect on these particulars, you must own that there are few historians, ancient or modern, that could so certainly judge of the truth of the facts they have related. You may perhaps think I have enlarged too much in stating so clear a case: but you will please to remember, it is the foundation of the whole argument; and that this branch of it alone cuts off infidels from that refuge which I believe they would generally choose, that of pleading the apostles were enthusiasts; and leaves them silent, unless they will say they were impostors: for you evidently see, that, could we suppose these facts to be false, they could by no means pretend an involuntary mistake, but must in the most criminal and aggravated sense, as Paul himself expresses it, be found false witnesses of God. But how unreasonable it would be to charge them with so notorious a crime, will in part appear if we consider—

2. *That the character of those writers, so far as we can judge by their works, seems to render them worthy of regard, and leaves no room to imagine they intended to deceive us.*

I shall not stay to show at large, that they appear to have been persons of natural sense, and, at the time of their writing, of a composed mind; for I verily believe no man that ever read the New Testament with attention could believe they

were idiots or madmen. Let the discourses of Christ in the Evangelists, of Peter and Paul in the Acts, as well as many passages in the Epistles, be perused, and I will venture to say he who is not charmed with them must be a stranger to all the justest rules of polite criticism; but he who suspects that the writers wanted common sense, must himself be most evidently destitute of it; and he who can suspect they might possibly be distracted, must himself, in this instance at least, be just as mad as he imagines them to have been.

It was necessary, however, just to touch upon this; because, unless we are satisfied that a person be himself in what he writes, we cannot pretend to determine his character from his writings. Having premised this, I must entreat you, as you peruse the New Testament, to observe what evident marks it bears of simplicity and integrity, of piety and benevolence; which when you have observed, you will find them pleading the cause of its authors with a resistless, though a gentle eloquence; and powerfully persuading the mind, that men who are capable of writing so excellently well are not, without the strongest evidence, to be suspected of acting so detestably ill as we must suppose they did if in this solemn manner they were carrying on an imposture, in such circumstances as attended the case before us. For—

1. The manner in which they tell their amazing story is most happily adapted to gain our belief. For as they tell it with a great detail of circumstances, which would by no means be prudent in legendary writers, because it leaves so much the more room for confutation; so they also do it in the most easy and natural manner. There is no air of declamation and harangue: nothing that looks like artifice and design; no apologies, no encomiums, no characters, no reflections, no digressions; but the facts are recounted with great simplicity, just as they seem to have happened; and those facts are left to speak for themselves and their great author. It is plain that the rest of the writers, as well as the apostle Paul, did not affect excellency of speech, or flights of eloquence (as the phrase signifies), but determined to know nothing, though amongst the most learned and polite, save Jesus Christ, even him that was crucified; a conduct that is the more to be admired, when we consider how extraordinary a theme theirs was, and with what abundant variety of most pathetic declamation it would easily have furnished any common writer; so that one would really wonder how they

could forbear it. But they rightly judged, that a vain affectation of ornament, when recording such a story as of their own knowledge, might perhaps have brought their sincerity into question, and so have rendered the cross of Christ of none effect.

2. Their integrity does likewise evidently appear in the freedom with which they mention those circumstances which might have exposed their Master and themselves to the greatest contempt amongst prejudiced and inconsiderate men; such as they knew they must generally expect to meet with. As to their Master, they scruple not to own that his country was infamous, his birth and education mean, and his life indigent; that he was most disdainfully rejected by the rulers, and accused of Sabbath-breaking, blasphemy, and sedition; that he was reviled by the populace as a debauchee, a lunatic, and a demoniac; and at last, by the united rage of both rulers and people, was publicly executed as the vilest of malefactors, with all imaginable circumstances of ignominy, scorn, and abhorrence; nor do they scruple to own that terror and distress of spirit into which he was thrown by his sufferings, though this was a circumstance at which some of the heathens took the greatest offence, as utterly unworthy so excellent and divine a person. As to themselves, the apostles readily confess not only the meanness of their original employments and the scandals of their former life, but their prejudices, their follies, and their faults, after Christ had honoured them with so holy a calling: they acknowledge their slowness of apprehension under so excellent a teacher, their unbelief, their cowardice, their ambition, their rash zeal, and their foolish contentions. So that, on the whole, they seem everywhere to forget that they are writing of themselves, and appear not at all solicitous about their own reputation, but only that they might represent the matter just as it was, whether they went through honour or dishonour, through evil report or good report. Nor is this all: for—

2. It is certain, that there are in their writings the most genuine traces not only of a plain and honest, but a most pious and devout, a most benevolent and generous, disposition. These appear especially in the epistolary parts of the New Testament, where indeed we should most reasonably expect to find them: and of these I may confidently affirm, that the greater progress any one has made in love to God, in zeal for his glory, in a compassionate and generous con-

cern for the present and future happiness of mankind; the more humble, and candid, and temperate, and pure, he is; the more ardently he loves truth, and the more steadily he is determined to suffer the greatest extremity in its defence; in a word, the more his heart is weaned from the present world, and the more it is fired with the prospects of a glorious immortality, the more pleasure will he take in reading those writings, the more will he relish the spirit which discovers itself in them, and find that, as face answers to face in water, so do the traces of piety and goodness which appear there answer to those which a good man feels in his own soul. Nay, I will add, that the warm and genuine workings of that excellent and holy temper which everywhere discovers itself in the New Testament, have for many ages been the most effectual means of spreading a spirit of virtue and piety in the world; and what of it is to be found in these degenerate days seems principally owing to these incomparable and truly divine writings.

Where then there are such genuine marks of an excellent character, not only in laboured discourses, but in epistolary writings, and those sometimes addressed to particular and intimate friends, to whom the mind naturally opens itself with the greatest freedom, surely no candid and equitable judge would lightly believe them to be all counterfeit; or would imagine, without strong proof, that persons who breathe such exalted sentiments of virtue and piety should be guilty of any notorious wickedness: and in proportion to the degree of enormity and aggravation attending such a supposed crime, it may justly be expected, that the evidence of their having really committed it should be unanswerably strong and convincing.

Now it is most certain, on the principle laid down above, that if the testimony of the apostles were false, they must have acted as detestable and villanous a part as one can easily conceive. To be found (as the apostle with his usual energy expresses it) false witnesses of God, 1 *Cor.* xv. 15, in any single instance, and solemnly to declare him miraculously to have done what we know in our own consciences was never done at all, would be an audacious degree of impiety, to which none but the most abandoned of mankind could arrive. Yet, if the testimony of the apostles was false (as we have proved they could not be themselves mistaken in it) this must have been their conduct, and that not in one single instance

only, but in a thousand. Their life must, in effect, be one continued and perpetual scene of perjury; and all the most solemn actions of it (in which they were speaking to God, or speaking of him as the God and Father of Christ, from whom they received their mission and powers), must be a most profane and daring insult on all the acknowledged perfections of his nature.

And the inhumanity of such conduct would, on the whole, have been equal to its impiety: for it was deceiving men in their most important interests, and persuading them to venture their whole future happiness on the power and fidelity of one whom, on this supposition, they knew to have been an impostor, and justly to have suffered a capital punishment for his crimes.

It would have been great guilt to have given the hearts and devotions of men so wrong a turn, even though they had found magistrates ready to espouse and establish, yea, and to enforce, the religion they taught. But to labour to propagate it in the midst of the most vigorous and severe opposition from them, must equally enhance the guilt and folly of the undertaking: for by this means they made themselves accessary to the ruin of thousands; and all the calamities which fell on such proselytes, or even on their remotest descendants, for the sake of Christianity, would be in a great measure chargeable on these first preachers of it. The blood of honest, yea, and (supposing them, as you must, to have been involuntarily deceived), of pious, worthy, and heroic persons, who might otherwise have been the greatest blessings to the public, would, in effect, be crying for vengeance against them: and the distresses of the widows and orphans, which those martyrs might leave behind them, would join to swell the account.

So that, on the whole, the guilt of those malefactors who are from time to time the victims of public justice, even for robbery, murder, or treason, is small when compared with that which we have now been supposing; and corrupt as human nature is, it appears to me utterly improbable that twelve men should be found, I will not say in one little nation, but even on the whole face of the earth, who could be capable of entering into so black a confederacy on any terms whatsoever.

And now, in this view of the case, make a serious pause, and compare with it what we have just been saying of the character of the apostles of Jesus, so far as an indifferent person could conjecture it from their writings; and then say whether you can in your hearts believe them to

have been those abandoned wretches, at once the reproach of mankind? You cannot surely believe such things of any, and much less of them, unless it shall appear they were in some peculiar circumstances of strong temptation; and what those circumstances could be, it is extremely difficult even for imagination to conceive.

But history is so far from suggesting any unthought-of fact to help our imagination on this head, that it bears strongly the contrary way; and hardly any part of my work is easier than to show—

3. *That they were under no temptation to forge a story of this kind, or to publish it to the world knowing it to be false.*

They could reasonably expect no gain, no reputation, by it; but on the contrary, supposing it an imposture, they must, with the most ordinary share of prudence, have foreseen infamy and ruin as the certain consequences of attempting it. For the grand foundation of their scheme was, that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified at Jerusalem by the Jewish rulers, was the son of God, and the Lord of all things. I appeal to your consciences, whether this looks at all like the contrivance of artful and designing men? It was evidently charging upon the princes of their country the most criminal and aggravated murder; indeed, all things considered, the most enormous act of wickedness which the sun had ever seen. They might, therefore, depend upon it that these rulers would immediately employ all their art and power to confute their testimony and to destroy their persons. Accordingly, one of them was presently stoned, *Acts* vii. 59, and another quickly after beheaded, *Acts* xii. 2, and most of the rest were scattered abroad into strange cities, *Acts* viii. 1, 4. xi. 29, where they would be sure to be received with great prejudices, raised against them among the Jews by reports from Jerusalem, and vastly strengthened by the expectations of a temporal Messiah; expectations which, as the apostles knew by their own experience, it was exceeding difficult to root out of men's minds; expectations which would render the doctrine of Christ crucified an insuperable stumbling-block to the Jews, 1 *Cor.* i. 23.

Nor could they expect a much better reception amongst the Gentiles; with whom their business was to persuade them to renounce the gods of their ancestors, and to depend upon a person who had died the death of a malefactor and a slave; to persuade them to forego

the pompous idolatries in which they had been educated, and all the sensual indulgences with which their religion (if it might be called a religion) was attended, to worship one invisible God through one Mediator, in the most plain and simple manner; and to receive a set of precepts, most directly calculated to control and restrain, not only the enormities of men's actions, but the irregularities of their hearts. A most difficult undertaking! And to engage them to this, they had no other arguments to bring but such as were taken from the views of an invisible state of happiness or misery, of which they asserted their crucified Jesus to be the supreme disposer: who should another day dispense his blessings, or his vengeance, as the gospel had been embraced or rejected. Now, could it be imagined that men would easily be persuaded merely on the credit of their affirmation or in compliance with their importunity, to believe things which to their prejudiced minds would appear so improbable; and to submit to impositions to their corrupt inclinations so insupportable? And if they could not persuade them to it, what could the apostles then expect? what, but to be insulted as fools or madmen, by one sort of people; and by another to be persecuted with the most savage and outrageous cruelty, as blasphemers of the gods, as seducers of the people, and as disturbers of the public peace? All which we know accordingly happened: nay, they assure us, that their Lord had often warned them of it; and that they themselves expected it, and thought it necessary to admonish their followers to expect it too; and it appears that, far from drawing back upon that account, as they would surely have done if they had been governed by secular motives, they became so much the more zealous and courageous, and encouraged each other to resist even to blood. Now, as this is a great evidence of the integrity and piety of their character, and thus illustrates the former head; so it serves to the purpose now immediately in view, *i.e.* it proves how improbable it is that any persons of common sense should engage in an imposture from which (as many have justly observed) they could, on their own principles, have nothing to expect but ruin in this world and damnation in the next. When, therefore, we consider and compare their character and their circumstances, it appears utterly improbable, on various accounts, that they would have attempted in this article to impose upon the world. But suppose that in consequence of some unaccountable as well as undiscoverable frenzy,

they had ventured on the attempt, it is easy to show—

4. *That, humanly speaking, they must quickly have perished in it, and their foolish cause must have died with them, without ever gaining any credit in the world.*

One may venture to say this in general, on the principles which I before laid down: but it appears still more evident, when we consider the nature of the fact they asserted, in conjunction with the methods they took to engage men to believe it; methods which, had the apostles been impostors, must have had the most direct tendency to ruin both their scheme and themselves.

1. Let us a little more particularly reflect on the nature of that grand fact, the death, resurrection and exaltation, of Christ; which, as I observed, was the great foundation of the Christian scheme, as first exhibited by the apostles. The resurrection of a dead man, and his ascension into and abode in the upper world, was so strange a thing that a thousand objections would immediately be raised against it; and some extraordinary proof would justly be required, as a balance to them. Now I wish the rejecters of the gospel would set themselves to invent some hypothesis, which should have any appearance of probability, to show how such an amazing story should ever gain credit in the world, if it had not some very convincing proof. Where and when could it first begin to be received? was it in the same, or a succeeding age? was it at Jerusalem, the spot of ground on which it is said to have happened, or in Greece, or Italy, or Asia, or Africa? You may change the scene, and the time, as you please; but you cannot change the difficulty.

Take it in a parallel instance. Suppose twelve men in London were now to affirm that a person executed there as a malefactor in a public manner a month or six weeks ago, or if you please a year, or five, or ten years since (for it is much the same), was a prophet sent from God with extraordinary powers; that he was raised from the dead; that they conversed with him after his revival, and at last saw him taken up into heaven: would their united testimony make them be believed there? Or suppose them, if you please, to subsequently disperse, and that one or two of them should go on to more distant places, suppose Leicester, Nottingham or York, and tell their story there; and that others were to carry it over to Paris, or Amsterdam, or to Vienna, or Madrid; could they expect any

more credit with us, or with them, or hope for anything better than to be looked upon as lunatics, and treated as such? And if they should go into other places, and attempt to mend their scheme by saying their master was put to death 100 or 200 years ago, when there could be no historical evidence of it discovered, and no proof given but their own confident assertion: would they remove, or would they not rather increase, the difficulty? Or would they, in any of these cases, gain credit by the most dexterous tricks of legerdemain of which you can suppose them masters; especially if they should undertake in consequence of such supposed facts to engage men to renounce the religion in which they had been educated; to deny themselves in their dearest passions, and most important worldly interests; and even probably to hazard their liberties and their lives, in dependence on a future reward, to be received in a place and state which no man living on earth had ever seen or known? You would readily allow this to be an insupposable case: and why should you suppose it to have happened sixteen or seventeen hundred years ago? You may assure yourselves, that the reason and the passions of mankind were at that remote period as strong as they are now.

But let us a little more particularly consider—

2. The manner in which the apostles undertook to prove the truth of their testimony to this fact: and it will evidently appear, that instead of confirming their scheme, it must have been sufficient utterly to have overthrown it, had it been itself the most probable imposture that the wit of man could ever have contrived. You know, they did not merely assert that they had seen miracles wrought by this Jesus, but that he had endowed themselves with a variety of miraculous powers. And these they undertook to display, not in such idle and useless tricks as sleight of hand might perform, but in such solid and important works as appeared worthy a divine interposition, and entirely superior to human power; restoring, as they pretend, sight to the blind, soundness to lepers, activity to the lame, and, in some instances, life to the dead. Nor were these things undertaken in a corner, in a circle of friends or dependents; nor were they said to be wrought on such as might be suspected of being confederates in the fraud; but they were done often in the public streets, in the sight of enemies, on the persons of such as were utter strangers to the apostles, but sometimes well known to neighbours and spectators,

as having long laboured under these calamities, to human skill utterly incurable. Would impostors have made such pretensions as these? or if they had, must they not immediately have been exposed and ruined?

Nor is there any room at all to object, that perhaps the apostles might not undertake to do these things on the spot, but only assert they had done them elsewhere; for even then it would have been impossible they should have gained credit; and they would have seemed the less credible on account of such a pretence. Whatever appearances there might have been of gravity, integrity, and piety, in the conversation of Peter (for instance), very few, especially few that had known but little of him, would have taken it upon his word, that he saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead at Bethany; but fewer yet would have believed it upon his affirmation, had it been ever so solemn, that he had himself raised Dorcas at Joppa; unless he had done some extraordinary work before them correspondent at least, if not equal to that. You will easily think of invincible objections, which otherwise might have been made; and, undoubtedly, the more such assertions had been multiplied, every new person, and scene, and fact, had been an additional advantage given to the enemy, to have detected and confuted the whole scheme which Peter and his associates had thus endeavoured to establish.

But to come still closer to the point: if the New Testament be genuine (as I have already proved it), then it is certain that the apostles pretended to have wrought miracles in the very presence of those to whom their writings were addressed; nay more, they profess likewise to have conferred those miraculous gifts, in some considerable degrees, on others, even on the very persons to whom they write; and they appeal to their consciences as to the truth of it. And could there possibly be room for delusion here? It is exceedingly remarkable to this purpose, that Paul makes this appeal to the Corinthians and Galatians when there were amongst them some persons disaffected to him, who were taking all opportunities to sink his character, and destroy his influence: and could they have wished for a better opportunity than such an appeal? An appeal which, had not the fact it supposed been certain, far from recovering those that were wavering in their esteem, must have been sufficient utterly to disgust his most cordial and steady friends. And the same remark may be applied to the

advices and reproofs which the apostle there gives, relating to the use and abuse of their spiritual gifts; which had been most notoriously absurd, and even ridiculous, had not the Christians to whom he wrote been really possessed of them. And these gifts were so plainly supernatural, that (as it has often been observed) if it be allowed that miracles can prove a divine revelation, and that the first epistle to the Corinthians be genuine (of which, by the way, there is at least as pregnant evidence as that any part of the New Testament is so), then it follows by a sure and easy consequence, that Christianity is true. Nevertheless, other arguments are not to be forgotten in this survey. And, therefore, as I have proved under this head that, had the testimony of the apostles been false, it is not to be imagined that they could have gained credit at all; and especially when they had put the proof of their cause on such a footing as we are sure they did; I am now to show you—

5. *That it is certain in fact, that the apostles did gain early credit, and succeeded in a most wonderful manner;* from which it will follow that their testimony was true.

That the apostles did indeed gain credit in the world, is evident from (what I before offered to prove) the early prevalence of Christianity in it; and may farther be confirmed from many passages in the New Testament. And here I insist not so much on express historical testimonies (though some of them are very remarkable, especially that of the brethren at Jerusalem, who speak of many myriads of believing Jews assembled at the feast of Pentecost), but I argue from the epistles written to several churches; which plainly prove, that there were congregations of Christians in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Colosse, Thessalonica, Phillippi, Laodicea, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Crete, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythinia, and many other places; insomuch that one of the apostles could say, that Christ had so wrought by him to make the Gentiles obedient, not only in word or profession, but in deed too, that from Jerusalem even round about unto Illyricum he had fully preached the gospel of Christ; or, as the word imports, had accomplished the purposes of it. And there is a great deal of reason, both from the nature of the thing, and from the testimony of ancient history, to believe that others of the apostles had considerable success elsewhere; so that St. Paul might

with reason apply to them and their doctrine what is originally spoken of the luminaries of heaven, and the instruction they communicate, "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."

So great was the number of those who were proselyted to Christianity by the preaching of the apostles: and we have all imaginable reason to believe that there were none of these proselytes but who were fully persuaded of the truth of the testimony they bore; for otherwise no imaginable reason can be given for their entering themselves into such a profession. The apostles had no secular terrors to affright them, no secular rewards to bribe them, no dazzling eloquence to enchant them: on the contrary, all these were in a powerful manner pleading against the apostles; yet their testimony was received, and their new converts were so thoroughly satisfied with the evidence which they gave them of their mission, that they encountered great persecutions, and cheerfully ventured estate, liberty and life itself, on the truth of the facts they asserted; as plainly appears from many passages in the epistles which none can think the apostles would have ever writ if these Christians had not been in a persecuted condition.

Nor will it signify anything to object, that most of those converts were persons of a low rank, and ordinary education, who, therefore, might be more easily imposed upon than others: for (not to mention Sergius Paulus, Dyonysius the Areopagite, or the domestics of Cæsar's household, with others of superior stations in life), it is sufficient to remind you, that, as I have largely shown, the apostles did not put their trust on the issue of laboured arguments, in which the populace might quickly have been entangled and lost; but on such plain facts as they might judge of as easily and surely as any others; indeed, on what they themselves saw, and in part too on what they felt.

Now, I apprehend, this might be sufficient to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion. You have seen that as there is no reason to believe that the apostles, who certainly knew the truth, would have attempted a fraud of this kind;—so if they had attempted it, they could not possibly have succeeded;—nevertheless, they did succeed in a very remarkable manner;—whence it plainly follows, that what they testified was true.

And now then, after this, the reasonableness of receiving the gospel, on admitting the truth of what they testified concerning Christ, is an

easy consequence. Yet some things are to be offered under this head which are of great weight, and would not so conveniently have fallen under any of the former; and some considerable additional evidence to the truth of Christianity arises from what has happened in the world since its first propagation. And therefore I choose rather to make a distinct discourse on these, with the improvement of the whole, than to throw together the hints of them in so hasty a manner as I must do should I attempt to dispatch the subject in this discourse, the just limits of which I have already transgressed, lest the great chain of the argument should be broken.

SERMON III.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY, AND REFLECTIONS ON THE WHOLE.

We have not followed cunningly devised fables. 2 Pet. i. 16.

AS I had before proved the books of the New Testament to be genuine, I proceeded in my last discourse to argue thence the certain truth of the Christian revelation; and we have made some considerable progress in the argument.

The matter, in short, stands thus:—The authors of the New Testament certainly knew whether the facts they asserted were true or false, so that they could not themselves be deceived; neither can we think they would attempt to deceive others, since they appear, by their manner of writing, to have been persons of great integrity and goodness;—and it is likewise evident they could have no temptation to attempt a fraud of this nature:—however, if they had attempted it, we cannot imagine they could have gained credit in the world, if the facts they asserted had not been true;—nevertheless

they did gain credit in a very remarkable manner; whence it plainly follows that those facts were true. Now I am to show farther, to complete the proof of our grand proposition,

6. *That admitting the facts which they testified concerning Christ to be true, then it was reasonable for their contemporaries, and is reasonable for us, to receive the gospel which they have transmitted to us, as a divine revelation.*

The great thing they asserted was, that Jesus was the Christ, and that he was proved to be so, by prophecies accomplished in him, and by others in his name. Let us attend to each of these, and I am persuaded we shall find them no contemptible arguments; but must be forced to acknowledge, that the premises being established, the conclusion most easily and necessarily follows; and this conclusion, that Jesus is the Christ, taken in all its extent, is an abstract of the gospel revelation, and therefore is sometimes put for the whole of it.

The apostles, especially when disputing with the Jews, did frequently argue from the prophecies of the Old Testament; in which, they say, many things were expressly foretold which were most literally and exactly fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Now greatly to the evidence, confirmation and advantage of Christianity, so it is that these prophecies are to this day extant in their original language; and this in the hands of a people most implacably averse to the gospel; so that an attentive reader may still, in a great measure, satisfy himself as to the validity of the argument drawn from them.

On searching these ancient and important records we find not only in the general that God intended to raise up for his people an illustrious deliverer who amongst other glorious titles is sometimes called the Messiah, or the Anointed One: but we are more particularly told that this great event should happen before the government ceased in the tribe of Judah; while the second temple was standing; and a little before its destruction, about 490 years after a command given to rebuild Jerusalem; which was probably issued out in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, or at least within a few years before or after it. It is predicted that he should be of the seed of Abraham, born of a virgin of the house of David, in the town of Bethlehem; that he should be anointed with an extraordinary effusion of the Divine Spirit, in virtue of which he should not only be a perfect and illustrious example of universal holiness and

goodness, but should also perform many extraordinary and beneficial miracles: nevertheless, that for want of external pomp and splendour, he should be rejected and insulted by the Jews, and at length be cut off and slain by them. It is added, that he should rise from the dead before his body should be corrupted in the grave, and should be received up to heaven, and there seated at the right hand of God; whence he should in a wonderful manner pour out his Spirit on his followers: in consequence of which, though the body of the Jewish people perished in their obstinate opposition to him, yet the Gentiles should be brought to the knowledge of the true God, and a kingdom established amongst them, which from small beginnings should spread itself to the ends of the earth, and continue to the remotest ages.

Besides these most material circumstances, there were several others relating to him, which were either expressly foretold or at least hinted at; all which, with those already mentioned, had so evident an accomplishment in Jesus (allowing the truth of the facts which the apostles testified concerning him), that we have no reason to wonder that they should receive the word with all readiness, who searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so predicted there, as the apostles affirmed. For I am persuaded that no wise and religious man could imagine that God would permit an impostor to arise, in whom so great a variety of predictions, delivered by so many different persons, and in so many distant ages, should have an exact accomplishment.

When the apostles were preaching to heathens, it is indeed true that they generally waved the argument from prophecy, because they were not so capable judges of it: but then they insist on another which might as soon captivate their belief and as justly vindicate it; I mean, the miracles performed by Christ, and those commissioned and influenced by him. Many of these were of such a nature as not to admit of any artifice or deceit; especially that most signal one of his resurrection from the dead, which I may call a miracle performed by, as well as upon, Christ; because he so expressly declares that he had himself a power to resume his life at pleasure. The apostles well knew this was a fact of such a nature that they who believed this would never doubt of the rest; they therefore often single this out, and lay the whole stress of their cause upon it. This they proved to be true by their own testimony miraculously

confirmed; and in proving this they establish Christianity on an impregnable rock. For I may safely refer it to any of you to judge whether it is an imaginable thing that God should raise the dead body of an impostor?—especially when he had solemnly appealed to such a resurrection as the grand proof of his mission, and had expressly fixed the very day it was to happen. I persuade myself you are convinced by all this, that they who had on the apostles' testimony believed that the prophecies of the Old Testament were accomplished in Jesus, and that God bore witness to him by miracles, and raised him from the dead, had abundant reason to believe that the doctrine which Christ taught was divine, and his gospel a revelation from heaven. And if they had reason to admit this conclusion, then it is plain that we, who have such satisfactory evidence on the one hand that the testimony of the apostles was credible, and on the other that this was the substance of it, have reason also to admit this grand inference from it, and to embrace the gospel as a faithful saying, and as well worthy of all acceptation. This is the thing I was attempting to prove; and here I should end the argument were it not for the confirmation it may receive from some additional considerations, which could not properly be introduced under any of the preceding heads. I add, therefore—

7. In the last place, *That the truth of the gospel has received farther and very considerable confirmation from what has happened in the world since it was first published.*

And here I must desire you more particularly to consider—on the one hand, what God has been doing to establish it; and on the other, the methods which its enemies have taken to destroy it.

1. Consider *what God has been doing to confirm the gospel since its first publication*, and you will find it a farther evidence of its divine original.

I might here argue at large from its surprising propagation in the world; from the miraculous powers with which not only the apostles but succeeding preachers of the gospel and other converts were endowed; from the accomplishment of prophecies recorded in the New Testament; and from the preservation of the Jews as a distinct people, notwithstanding the various difficulties and persecutions through which they have passed.

I might particularly urge in confirmation of the truth of Christianity, "the wonderful success with which it was attended, and the surprising propagation of the gospel in the world."

I have before endeavoured under a former head to show you that the gospel met with so favourable a reception in the world, as evidently proved that its first publishers were capable of producing such evidence of its truth as an imposture could not admit. But now I carry the remark farther, and assert that, considering the circumstances of the case, it is amazing that even truth itself, under so many disadvantages, should have so illustrious a triumph; and that its wonderful success does evidently argue such an extraordinary interposition of God in its favour as may justly be called a miraculous attestation to it.

There was not only one of a family, or two of a city, taken and brought to Zion; but so did the Lord hasten it in its appointed time, that a little one became a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. And as the apostles themselves were honoured with very remarkable success, so this divine seed was propagated so fast in the next age, that Pliny testifies, "he found the heathen temples in Achaia almost deserted;" and Tertullian afterwards boasts, "that all places but those temples were filled with Christians; so that were they only to withdraw, cities and provinces would be depopulated." Nor did the gospel only triumph thus within the boundaries of the Roman empire; for long before Tertullian was born, Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, which seems to have been written not much above 100 years after Christ's death, declares, "that there was no nation of men, whether Greeks or barbarians, not excepting those savages that wandered in clans from one region to another, and had no fixed habitation, who had not learnt to offer prayers and thanksgivings to the Father and Maker of all, in the name of Jesus who was crucified."

Now how can we account for such a scene as this, but by saying that the hand of the Lord was with the first preachers of the gospel, and therefore such multitudes believed, and turned unto the Lord? How had it been possible that so small a fountain should presently have swelled into a mighty river, and even have covered the face of the earth, had it not sprung from the sanctuary of God, and been rendered thus triumphant by his almighty arm?

Had this new religion, so directly contrary to all the prejudices of

education, been contrived to soothe men's vices, to assert their errors, to defend their superstitions, or to promote their secular interests, we might easily have accounted for its prevalence in the world. Had its preachers been very profound philosophers, or polite and fashionable orators, many might have been charmed, at least for a while, to follow them; or had the princes and potentates of the earth declared themselves its patrons, and armed their legions for its defence and propagation, multitudes might have been terrified into the profession, though not a soul could by such means have been rationally persuaded to the belief of it. But without some such advantages as these, we can hardly conceive how any new religion should so strangely prevail; even though it had crept into the world in its darkest ages and most barbarous countries, and though it had been gradually proposed in the most artful manner, with the finest veil industriously drawn over every part which might at first have given disgust to the beholder.

But you well know that the very reverse of all this was the case here. You know, from the apparent constitution of Christianity, that the lusts and errors, the superstitions and interests, of carnal men, would immediately rise up against it as a most irreconcilable enemy. You know that as all the herd of heathen deities were to be discarded, the priests, who subsisted on that craft, must in interest find themselves obliged to oppose it. You know, that the princes of the earth drew their swords against it, and armed torments and death for the destruction of its followers. And yet you see that it triumphed over all, though published in ages and places of the greatest learning and refinement, and proposed, not in an ornamental and artificial manner, but with the utmost plainness; the doctrines of the cross being always avowed as its grand fundamentals, though so notorious a stumbling-block both to Jews and Gentiles; and the absolute necessity, not only of embracing Christianity, but also of renouncing all idol worship, being insisted on immediately and in the strongest terms, though it must make the gospel appear the most singular and unsocial religion that had ever been taught in the world.

Had one of the wits or politicians of these ages seen the apostles, and a few other plain men, who had been educated among the lowest of the people, as most of the first teachers of Christianity were, going out armed with nothing but faith, truth,

and goodness, to encounter the power of princes, the bigotry of priests, the learning of the philosophers, the rage of the populace, and the prejudices of all; how would he have derided the attempt, and said with Sanballat, *Neh.* iv. 2, "What will these feeble Jews do?" But had he seen the event, surely he must have owned with the Egyptian magi, *Exod.* viii. 19, in a far less illustrious miracle, that it was the finger of God; and might justly have fallen on his face, even amongst those whom he had insulted, with an humble acknowledgment that God was in them of a truth.

I might here farther urge "those miracles which were wrought in confirmation of the Christian doctrine, for a considerable time after the death of the apostles."

The most signal and best attested of these, was the dispossessing of devils; whom God seems to have permitted to rage with unusual violence about those times, that his Son's triumph over them might be so much the more remarkable, and that the old serpent might be taken in his own craftiness. I doubt not but many of you have heard that more than two hundred years after the death of Christ, some of the most celebrated defenders of the gospel which the church has in any age produced, I mean Tertullian and Minutius Felix, do not only challenge any of their heathen enemies and persecutors to bring them a demoniac, engaging at the hazard of their lives to oblige the evil spirit, in the name and by the authority of Christ, to quit his possession; but do also appeal to it, as a fact publicly known, that those who were agitated by such spirits, stood terrified and amazed in the presence of a Christian, and that their pretended gods were forced then to own themselves devils.

I wave the testimonies of some later writers of the Christian church, lest the credulity of their temper, joined with the circumstances attending some of the facts they record, should furnish out objections against their testimony; though I think we cannot, without great injustice to the character of the learned and pious Augustin, suspect the truth of some amazing facts of this kind which he has attested as of his own personal certain knowledge.

Nor must I on this occasion forget to mention the accomplishment of several prophecies recorded in the New Testament, as a farther confirmation given by God to the gospel.

The most eminent and singular instance under this head is that of our Lord's prediction concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, as it

is recorded by St. Matthew, in his twenty-fourth chapter. The tragical history of it is most circumstantially described by Josephus, a Jewish priest, who was an eye-witness of it: and the description he has given of this sad calamity so exactly corresponds to the prophecy that one would have thought, had we not known the contrary, that it had been written by a Christian on purpose to illustrate it; and one can never enough admire that series of amazing providences by which the author was preserved from the most imminent danger, that he might leave us that invaluable treasure which his writings contain.

We have no need of any farther evidence than we find in him, of the exact accomplishment of what was prophesied concerning the destruction of Jerusalem: but our Lord had also foretold the long-continued desolation of their temple; and I cannot forbear reminding you of the awful sanction that was given to that part of the prediction: for it is well known that a heathen historian has assured us that, when Julian the apostate, in deliberate contempt of that prediction, solemnly and resolutely undertook to rebuild it, his impious design was miraculously frustrated again and again, and the workmen consumed by globes of fire which broke out from the foundations.

The prediction of St. Paul concerning the man of sin, and the apostacy of the latter times, 2 *Thess.* iii. 3—12, 1 *Tim.* iv. 1—3, is also well worthy of our remark. And though a great deal of the book of Revelation be still concealed under a dark veil; yet the division of the Roman empire into ten kingdoms, the usurpation, persecutions, and idolatry of the Romish church, and the long duration of the papal power, with several other extraordinary events, which no human prudence could have foreseen, and which have happened long since the publication of that book, are so clearly foretold there, that I cannot but look on that part of Scripture as an invaluable treasure; and think it not at all improbable, that the more visible accomplishment of some of its other prophecies may be a great means of reviving the Christian cause, which is at present so much on the decline.

"The preservation of the Jews as a distinct people," is another particular under this head, which well deserves our attentive regard.

It is plain they are vastly numerous, notwithstanding all the slaughter and destruction of this people in former and in later ages. They are dispersed in various most distant

nations, and particularly in those parts of the world where Christianity is professed: and though they are exposed to great hatred and contempt on account of their different faith, and in most places subjected to civil incapacities, if not to unchristian severities; yet they are still most obstinately tenacious of their religion: which is the more wonderful, as their fathers were so prone to apostatize from it; and as most of them seem to be utter strangers either to piety or humanity, and pour out the greatest contempt on the moral precepts of their own law, while they are so attached to the ceremonial institutions of it, troublesome and inconvenient as they are. Now seriously reflect what an evident hand of providence is here; that by their dispersion, preservation, and adherence to their religion, it should come to pass that Christians should daily see the accomplishment of many remarkable prophecies concerning this people; and that we should always have amongst us such a crowd of unexceptionable witnesses to the truth of those ancient Hebrew records, on which so much of the evidence of the gospel depends; records which are many of them so full to the purpose for which we allege them, that, as a celebrated writer very well observes, (*Spect.* vol. iii. No. 495.) "Had the whole body of the Jewish nation been converted to Christianity, men would certainly have thought they had been forged by Christians, and have looked upon them, with the prophecies of the Sybils, as made many years after the events they pretended to foretell." And, to add no more here, the preservation of the Jews as a distinct people evidently leaves room for the accomplishment of those Old and New Testament promises which relate to their national conversion and restoration; whereas that would be impossible in itself, or at least be impossible to be known, if they were promiscuously blended with other people: on the whole, it is such a scene in the conduct of Providence as, I am well assured, cannot be paralleled in the history of any other nation on earth, and affords a most obvious and important argument in favour of the gospel.

Thus has Christianity been farther confirmed, since its first publication, by what God has done to establish it. It only remains that we consider,

2. What confirmation it receives, *from the methods which its enemies have taken to destroy it.*

And these have generally been either persecution, or falsehood, or cavilling at some particulars in the

revelation, without entering into the grand argument on which it is built, and fairly debating what is offered in its defence. Now who would not think the better of a cause for being thus attacked?

At first you know that the professors, and especially the preachers, of the gospel, were severely persecuted. In every city bonds and imprisonments awaited them. As soon as ever the apostles began to preach Jesus and his resurrection, the Jewish rulers laid hold on them, and having confined and scourged them, strictly prohibited their speaking any more in that name. A little while after, Stephen was murdered; and afterwards James, and some others of the apostles. Now certainly such a conduct did evidently show a consciousness that they were not able to answer the apostles, and to support their own cause by the fair methods of reason and argument; to which, so far as the historian informs us, they made no pretence; but attempted to bear them down by dint of authority, and silence them by brutal force.

The time would fail me, should I attempt particularly to show how these unrighteous methods were pursued in succeeding ages, and distinct countries. The savage cruelties of Nero to these innocent and holy men were such as raised the pity even of their enemies; yet this was one of the least extensive and destructive of the ten general persecutions which arose in the Roman empire, besides several others in the neighbouring countries, of which ecclesiastical history informs us.

These early enemies of the gospel added falsehood and slanders to their inhumanities. They endeavoured to murder the reputations of the Christians, as well as their persons, and were not ashamed to represent them as haters of the whole human species, for no imaginable reason but because they would not associate themselves in their idolatrous worship, but, with regard to charity and truth, were strongly bearing their testimony against it: nay, they charged them with human sacrifices, incest, idolatry, and all the crimes for which themselves and their foolish gods were indeed justly detestable; but from which the Christians knew how to vindicate themselves, highly to their own honour, and to the everlasting reproach of these malignant and pestilent accusers: and they have not failed to do it in many noble apologies, which, through the Divine providence, are transmitted to us, and are incomparably the most valuable of any ancient uninspired writings.

Such were the infamous and

scandalous methods by which the gospel was opposed in the earliest ages of the church; and I cannot forbear adding, "that the measures more lately taken to subvert it, especially amongst ourselves, seem to me rather to reflect a glory upon it." Its unhappy enemies have been told again and again that we put the proof of it on plain fact. They themselves do not, and cannot, deny that it prevailed early in the world, as we have shown at large. There must have been some man, or body of men, who first introduced it: they generally confess, that Christ and his apostles were the persons; and these apostles (on whose testimony what we know of Christ chiefly depends) must have been enthusiasts or impostors, if their testimony was false. Now which of these schemes will the unbeliever take? It seems, that the Deists of the present age fix on neither, as being secretly conscious they can support neither; but they content themselves with cavilling at some circumstances attending the revelation, without daring to encounter its grand evidence: *i.e.* they have been laboriously attempting to prove it "to be improbable, or absurd, to suppose that to have been, which nevertheless plainly appears to have been fact." One most weakly and sophistically pretends to prove, in defiance of the common sense of mankind, that the light of nature is a perfect rule, and therefore that all revelation is needless, and indeed impossible. Another disguises the miracles of Christ by false and foolish representations of them, and then sets himself to ridicule them as idle tales. And a third takes a great deal of fruitless pains to show, that some prophecies referred to in the New Testament are capable of another sense, different from that in which the apostles have taken them. These things have been set in a very artful and fallacious light by persons, whose names will be perhaps transmitted to posterity, with the infamous glory of having been leaders in the cause of infidelity; but not a man of them undertakes directly to answer what has been said to ascertain the grand fact. Nay, they generally take no more notice of the positive evidence, by which it is even demonstrated, than if they had never heard it proposed; though they cavil at incidental passages in those books, in which it is most clearly stated. And as for what they have urged—though perhaps some, who were before weary of Christianity, may have taken occasion from their writings to reject it; and others, for want of consulting the answers to them, may have been unwarily ensnared;—yet the ex-

amination of these points has been greatly to the honour and vindication of the truth, which seems on this occasion to have been set in a clearer and stronger light than ever, at least in these latter ages.

The cause of Christianity has greatly gained by debate, and the gospel comes like fine gold out of the furnace, which, the more it is tried, the more it is approved. I own the defenders of the gospel have appeared with very different degrees of ability for the work; nor could it be otherwise amongst such numbers of them: but on the whole, though the patrons of infidelity have been masters of some wit, humour, and address, as well as of a moderate share of learning, and generally much more than a moderate share of assurance; yet so great is the force of truth, that (unless we may except those writers who have unhappily called for the aid of the civil magistrate in the controversy), I cannot recollect that I have seen any defence of the gospel which has not, on the whole, been sufficient to establish it, notwithstanding all the sophistical arguments of its most subtle antagonists.

[This is an observation which is continually gaining new strength, as new assaults are made upon the gospel. And I cannot forbear saying, that, as if it were by a kind of judicial infatuation, some who have distinguished themselves in the wretched cause of infidelity, have been permitted to fall into such gross misrepresentations, such senseless inconsistencies, and such palpable falsehoods, and, in a word, into such a various and malignant superfluity of naughtiness, that to a wise and pious mind they must appear like those venomous creatures which are said to carry an antidote in their bowels against their own poison. A virtuous and well-bred Deist must turn away from some modern pieces of this kind with scorn and abhorrence; and a Christian might almost be tempted to wish that the books, with all their scandals about them, might be transmitted to posterity, lest when they come to live, like the writings of some of the ancient heathens, only in those of their learned and pious answerers, it should hardly be credited that ever the enemies of the gospel, in such an enlightened age, should be capable of so much impiety and folly.]

Thus I have given you a brief view of the chief arguments in proof of Christianity; and the sum of the whole is this—

The gospel is probable in theory; as considering the nature of God, and the circumstances of mankind, there was reason to hope a revelation might be given: and if any

were given, we should naturally apprehend its internal evidence would be such as that of the gospel is, and its external such as it is said to be. But it is also true in fact; for Christianity was early professed, as it was first introduced by Jesus of Nazareth, whose life and doctrines were published by his immediate attendants; whose books are preserved still in their original language, and in the main are faithfully translated into our own: so that the books of the New Testament now in your hands may be depended upon, as written by the persons whose names they bear. And admitting this, the truth of the gospel follows by a train of very easy consequences; for the authors certainly knew the truth of the facts they relate; and, considering what appears of their character and circumstances, we can never believe they would have attempted to deceive us; or, if they had, they could not have gained credit in the world: yet they did gain it in a remarkable manner: therefore the facts they attested are true. And the truth of the gospel evidently follows from the certainty of those facts, and is much confirmed by what has happened in the world since the first publication of it.

I shall conclude what I have to say on this subject with a few words by way of reflection.

1. *Let us gratefully acknowledge the Divine goodness, in favouring us with so excellent a revelation, and confirming it to us by such an ample evidence.*

We should be daily adoring the God of nature, for lighting up the sun, that glorious though imperfect image of his own unapproachable lustre; and appointing it to gild the earth with its various rays to cheer us with its benign influences, and to guide and direct us in our journeys and our labours. But how incomparably more valuable is that Dayspring from on high which has visited us, that Sun of righteousness which is risen upon us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace! O Christians, (for I now address myself to you, whose eyes are so happy as indeed to see, and your ears to hear), what reason have you for daily and hourly praise! when your minds are delighted with contemplating the riches of gospel grace, when you view with wonder and joy the harmonious contrivance of your redemption, when you feel the burden of your guilt removed, the freedom of your address to the throne

of grace encouraged, and see the prospect of a fair inheritance of eternal glory opening upon you; then in the pleasing transport of your souls borrow the joyful anthem of the Psalmist, and say, with the humblest gratitude and self-resignation, "God is the Lord, who hath given us light! bind the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar." Adore God, who first commanded the light to shine out of darkness, that by the discoveries of his word, and the operations of his Spirit, he has shined in your hearts, to give you the knowledge of his glory, as reflected from the face of his Son. Let us all adore him, that this revelation hath reached us, who live in an age and country so distant from that in which it first appeared, while there are to this day, not only dark corners, but regions of the earth which are full of the habitations of idolatry and cruelty.

Let me here particularly address myself to those whose education and circumstances of life have given them opportunities of a fuller inquiry into the state of those ancient or modern nations, that have been left merely to the light of unassisted reason; even to you, sirs, who are acquainted with the history of their gods, the rites of their priests, the tales, and even the hymns of their poets, (those beautiful trifles); nay, I will add, the reasonings of their sagest philosophers, all the precarious and all the erroneous things they have said, where religion and immortality are concerned. I have sometimes thought, that God gave to some of the most celebrated pagan writers that uncommon share of genius and eloquence, that they might as it were by their art embalm the monsters of antiquity, that so succeeding ages might see, in a more affecting view than we could otherwise have done, how weak the human mind is in its best estate, and the need which the greatest, as well as the meanest of mankind, have of being taught by a revelation from above. Permit me to remind you, that while you are daily conversing with such monuments as these, (as I know some of you are), and are also surveying the enemies of Christianity in a larger and more distinct view, you are under peculiar obligations to be very thankful for the gospel yourselves, as well as to compassionate the case of those to whom it has never been offered or by whom it is slighted. And this leads me to other reflections:

2. *What reason have we to pity those who reject this glorious gospel, even when they have opportunities of inquiring into its clearest evidence.*

Such undoubtedly there are in our

own age and nation: and surely we should sometimes bestow a compassionate thought upon them, and lift up an humble prayer for them; if God will peradventure give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are now led captive by him at his pleasure. We should pity heathens and Mahometans, under their darkness and errors; but how much more deplorable is the case of those, who, though they dwell in Emanuel's land, and in the valley of vision turn it into the valley of the shadow of death, by closing their eyes against so bright a lustre, and stopping their ears against the voice of the charmer! They are indeed in their own conceit the only people, and wisdom will die with them; so that to be sure they will scorn our pity: but who can forbear it? Is there a more melancholy thought than this, that the Son of God should have done so much to introduce and establish the gospel and his spirit, so much to perpetuate and increase its evidence, and that after all it should be contemptuously despised, even by creatures who are perishing without it? That the blessed Jesus, instead of being received with open arms as the great deliverer, should either be treated as an empty name, or if acknowledged to be a real person, should then be represented as a visionary enthusiast, or a wicked impostor; for there is no other alternative? And this not only, (though, I believe, most frequently), by men of profligate and abandoned lives, but sometimes by persons of external morality and decency, of great humanity and sweetness of temper (for such I know are to be found amongst them), as well as men of wit and genius, of politeness and learning, of human prudence and experience in affairs. I may also add, that it is the case of some, who were the children of pious parents, who were trained up in religious exercises, who once discovered serious impressions, and gave very encouraging hopes. Alas, whither are they fallen! and whither have we reason to fear they will at length fall! How shall we shelter those, that were once our brethren, that are perhaps still our friends, from the awful sentence which the gospel denounces against all that reject it, without any exception? As to the wretches that add insult and derision to their infidelity, I tremble to think of that load of guilt which they are bringing on themselves, and how near they approach to the unpardonable sin; if they have not already committed it. For the rest, who behave in a more modest and sober manner, it will, no

doubt, be a very difficult task to convince them: and so much the rather, as some of them, by too easy a transition, have renounced many of the most important principles of natural religion, nay, I might add, even the whole of it, together with the Christian revelation. But the influences of divine grace are almighty; let us recommend them to these, and omit no other proper method, either of recovering those who are already seduced, or at least of securing those who are not yet infected, but may be (as most of the youth are, especially in the most populous places,) in imminent danger of the contagion. To this end let me add,

3. *How reasonable it is, that Christians should form a familiar acquaintance with the great evidences of our common faith.*

It is what we so apparently owe to the honour of God, to the interest of Christ, to the peace of our own souls, and the edification of others, that I hope I need not urge it at large; especially considering what was said in the introduction to these discourses. In consequence of all, let it be your care to make the evidences of Christianity the subject of your serious reflections, and of your frequent converse: especially, study your bibles, where there are such marks of truth and divinity to be found, that I believe few that have familiarly known them, and have had a relish for them, were ever brought up to make shipwreck of the faith as it is in Jesus. Above all, let it be your care to act on the rules which are here laid down; and then you will find your faith growing in a happy proportion, and will experience the truth of our Saviour's declaration, that if any man will resolutely and faithfully do his will, he shall know of the Christian doctrine whether it be of God. I verily believe, it is the purity of its precepts, which lies at the bottom of most men's opposition to it; or a natural pride of heart, which gives them an aversion to so humbling a scheme; or a fond affectation of seeming wiser than others, in rejecting what most of their neighbours do at least profess to believe. When these unhappy prejudices and conceptions are by divine grace conquered and rooted out, the evidence of truth will daily appear with an increasing lustre; as the light of the sun does to an eye recovering from a film, with which it had been overgrown, and which before had veiled it with midnight in the midst of noon. Once more:

4. *How solicitous should we be to embrace and obey that gospel, which comes attended with such abundant evidence!*

I may undoubtedly address myself to most of you, my friends, and say, as Paul did to king Agrippa, Believest thou the prophets? and I may add, the evangelists, and the apostles? Yes, I know that you believe them: yet let me entreat and charge you not to rest here, but attentively to examine how far your hearts are affected, and your lives regulated, by such a belief. The Christian revelation is a practical thing: and it is heard, it is believed, it is professed, and even defended in vain, if it be not obeyed. Therefore do we so frequently read of obeying the truth and obeying the gospel, as a matter of so great importance.

In this gospel, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; but it is revealed with redoubled terror against that audacious sinner who holds the truth in unrighteousness. In this gospel the Lord Jesus Christ is exalted, both as a prince and a Saviour; and it is not with impunity that the impenitent rebel can reject his yoke, and trample on his blood: for if he that despised Moses' law died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment than even a capital execution must they be thought worthy who have poured contempt on such a Sovereign, and on such a Redeemer?

O let it be most seriously and frequently recollected, that this gospel is the touchstone by which you are another day to be tried; the balance, in which an impartial Judge will weigh you; and must on the whole prove your everlasting triumph, or your everlasting torment. The blessed God did not introduce it with such solemn notice, such high expectations, such pompous miracles, such awful sanctions, that men might reject or dishonour it at pleasure; but it will certainly be found, to the greatest and meanest of those that hear it, a savour of life unto life, or a savour of death unto death.

Let it therefore be your immediate care to inquire which of these it is like to prove to your souls; since it is so far from being a vain thing, that it is really your very life. If it has been hitherto despised, and that blessed Redeemer, in whom it so apparently centres, has been neglected; remember, that all which has been said in confirmation of its truth, does but in effect prove, that the handwriting of God himself is set to the sentence of your eternal condemnation. O therefore allow

not yourselves a moment's rest, till you have with submission applied to his throne, while yet there is hope that it may be reversed.

And as for you, my brethren, who have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be exhorted to walk in him; since it is the design of his gospel to teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly: and this not only as you have so comfortable an assurance that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord; but as it will be, on the whole, the most effectual method you can take in your respective stations to promote the gospel. If you indeed honour it, and love it, and desire it may be propagated in the world, let it be your care, not only to defend it by your tongues, but to adorn it by your lives: and in the words of that great champion in this sacred cause, be blameless and harmless, the children of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, shining amongst them as lights in the world, and so holding forth the word of life; and perhaps it may serve not only to entertain their eyes with wonder and glory, but to guide their feet into the way of peace, and may engage them also to join with you in glorifying your Father which is in heaven. Amen!

THE GOLDEN GROVE.

TO THE

PIOUS AND DEVOUT READER.

In this sad declension of religion, the seers, who are appointed to be the watchmen of the church, cannot but observe, that the supplanters and underminers are gone out, and are digging down the foundations; and having destroyed all public forms of ecclesiastical government, discountenanced an excellent liturgy, taken off the hinges of unity, disgraced the articles of religion, polluted public assemblies, taken away all cognizance of schism by mingling all sects, and giving countenance to that against which all power ought to stand upon their guard; there is nothing now left, but that we take care that men be Christians; for concerning the ornament and advantages of religion, we cannot make that provision we desire: *Incertis de salute de gloria minime certandum.* For since they who have seen Jerusalem in prosperity, and have forgotten the order of the morning and evening sacrifice, and the beauty of the temple, will be tempted to neglect so excellent a ministration, and their assembling themselves together for peace and holy offices; and be content with anything that is brought to them, though it be but the husks and acorns of prodigals and swine, so they may enjoy their lands and their money with it; we must now take care that the young men who were born in the captivity, may be taught how to worship the God of Israel after the manner of their forefathers, till it shall please God that religion shall return into the land, and dwell safely and grow prosperously.

But never did the excellency of the episcopal government appear so demonstratively and conspicuously as now: under their conduct and order we had a church so united, so orderly, so governed; a religion so settled; articles so true, sufficient, and confessed; canons so prudent, and so obeyed; devotions so regular and constant; sacraments so adorned and ministered; churches so beauteous and religious: circumstances of religion so grave and prudent, so useful and apt for edification, that the enemies of our church, who serve the Pope in all things, and Jesus Christ in some; who dare transgress an institution and ordnance of Christ, but dare not break a canon of the Pope, did despair of prevailing against us and truth, and knew no hopes but by setting their face against us, to destroy this government; and then they know they should triumph without any enemy: so Balaam the son of Beor was sent for to curse the people of the Lord, in hope that the son of Zippor might prevail against them that had long prospered under the conduct of Moses and Aaron.

But now, instead of the excellency of condition, and constitution of religion, the people are fallen under the harrows and saws of impertinent and ignorant preachers, who think all religion is a sermon, and all sermons ought to be libels against truth and old governors; and expound chapters that the meaning may never be understood; and pray that they may be thought able to talk, but not to hold their peace; they caring not to obtain anything but wealth and victory, power and plunder. And the people have reaped the fruits apt to grow upon such crab-stocks; they grow idle and false, hypocrites and careless; they deny themselves nothing that is pleasant, they despise religion, forget government, and some never think of heaven; and they that do, think to go thither in such paths which all the ages of the church did give men warning of, lest they should that way go to the devil.

But when men have tried all that they can, it is to be supposed they will return to the excellency and advantages of the Christian religion, as it is taught by the Church of England; for by destroying it, no end can be served but of sin and folly, faction and death eternal. For, besides that no church that is enemy to this, does worship God in that truth of propositions, in that un-

blameable and pious liturgy, and in preaching the necessities of holy life, so much as the Church of England does—besides this (I say) it cannot be persecuted by any governor that understandeth his own interest, unless he be first abused by false preachers, and then prefers his secret opinion before his public advantage: for no church in the world is so great a friend to loyalty and obedience as she and her sisters of the same persuasion. They that have bishops have destroyed monarchy; and they that would erect an ecclesiastical monarchy, must consequently subject the temporal to it; and both one and the other would be supreme in consciences: and they that govern there with an opinion, that in all things they ought to be attended to, will let their prince govern others, so long as he will be ruled by them.

And certainly for a prince to prosecute the Protestant religion, is as if a physician should endeavour to destroy all medicaments, and fathers kill their sons, and their master of ceremonies destroy all formalities and courtships; and as if the pope should root out all the ecclesiastic state. Nothing so combines with government, if it be of God's appointment, as the religion of the church of England, because nothing does more adhere to the word of God, and disregard the crafty advantages of the world. If any man shall not decline to try his title by the word of God, it is certain there is not in the world a better guard for it than the true Protestant religion, as it is taught in our church. But let things be as it pleases God; it is certain that in that day when truth gets her victory, in that day we shall prevail against all God's enemies and ours; not in the purchases and perquisites of the world, but in the rewards and returns of holiness and patience, and faith and charity; for by these we worship God, and against this interest we cannot serve anything else.

In the mean time, we must by all means secure the foundation, and take care that religion may be conveyed in all its material parts the same as it was, but by new and permitted instruments. For let us secure that our young men be good Christians, it is easy to make them good Protestants, unless they be abused with prejudice, and suck venom with their milk: they cannot leave our communion, till they have reason to reprove our doctrine.

There is, therefore, in the following pages, a compendium of what we are to believe, what to do, and what to desire. It is indeed very little; but it is enough to begin with, and will serve all persons as long as they need milk, and not strong meat. And he that hath given the following assistances to thee, desires to be even a doorkeeper in God's house, and to be a servant of the meanest of God's servants; and think it a worthy employment to teach the most ignorant, and make them to know Christ, though but in the first rudiments of an holy institution. This only he affirms, that there is a more solid comfort, and material support to a Christian spirit, in one article of faith, in one period of the Lord's prayer, in one holy lesson, than in all the disputes of impertinent people, who take more pains to prove there is a purgatory, than to persuade men to avoid hell: and that a plain catechism can more instruct a soul, than the whole day's prate which some daily spit forth, to bid them get Christ, and persecute his servants.

Christian religion is admirable for its wisdom, for its simplicity; and he that presents the following papers to thee, designs to teach thee as the church was taught in the early days of the apostles, to believe the Christian faith, and to understand it; to represent plain rules of good life, to describe easy forms of prayer; to bring into your assemblies hymns of glorification and thanksgivings, and psalms of prayer. By these easy paths they lead Christ's little ones into the fold of their great bishop: and if by this any service be done to God, any ministry to the soul of a child, or an ignorant woman, it is hoped that God will accept it: and it is reward enough if by my ministry, God will bring it to pass that any soul shall be instructed and brought into that state of good things that it shall rejoice for ever.

But do thou pray for him that desires this to thee, and endeavour it.

JER. TAYLOR.

THE

GOLDEN GROVE:

A

CHOICE MANUAL,

CONTAINING

WHAT IS TO BE BELIEVED, PRACTISED, AND DESIRED OR PRAYED FOR.

BY

JEREMY TAYLOR, D. D.

CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO KING CHARLES I., AND SOME TIME LORD BISHOP OF DOWN AND CONNOR.

CREDENDA:

OR,

WHAT IS TO BE BELIEVED.

A short Catechism for the Institution of young Persons in the Christian Religion.

Q. In what does true religion consist?

A. In the knowledge of the one true God, and whom he hath sent, Jesus Christ: and in the worshipping and serving them.

Q. What dost thou believe concerning God?

A. 1. That there is a God: 2. That he is One: 3. Eternal: 4. Almighty: 5. That he hath made all the world: 6. That he knows all things: 7. That he is a Spirit; not of any shape, or figure, or parts, or body: 8. That he is present in all places: 9. That his seat is in heaven, and he governs all the world; so that nothing happens without his order and leave; 10. That he is the fountain of justice, 11. Of mercy, 12. Of bounty or goodness: 13. That he is unalterably happy, and infinitely perfect: 14. That no evil can come near him: 15. And he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Q. What other mystery is revealed concerning God?

A. That God, being one in nature, is also three in person; expressed in Scripture by the name of "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." The first person being known to us by the name of "The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The second person is called "the Son," and "the Word of the Father." The third is, "the Spirit and promise of the Father." And these are three and one after a secret manner which we must believe, but cannot understand.

Q. What is this God to us?

A. He is our Creator and Father, and therefore he is our Lord; and we are his creatures, his sons, and his servants.

Q. Wherefore did God create and make us?

A. That we might do him honour and service, and receive from him infinite felicities.

Q. How did God make man?

A. By the power of his word, out of the slime of the earth; and he breathed into him the breath of life.

Q. Was man good or bad when God made him?

A. Man was made pure and innocent.

Q. How then did man become sinful and miserable?

A. By listening to the whispers of a tempting spirit, and breaking an easy commandment which God gave him as the first trial of his obedience.

Q. What evils and changes followed this sin?

A. Adam, who was the first man, and the first sinner, did, both for himself and his posterity, fall into the state of death, of sickness and misfortunes, and disorder both of body and soul: we were thrown out of Paradise, and lost our immortality.

Q. Was man left in these evils without remedy?

A. No; but God, pitying his creature, promised, that of the seed of the woman he would raise up a Saviour and Redeemer, who should restore us to God's favour, and to the felicity which we lost.

Q. How did God perform his promise?

A. By sending Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, to die for our sins, to become our Lord, and the author of holiness, and life and salvation to mankind.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ?

A. He is the Son of God, the second person of the holy Trinity, equal with the Father, true God, without beginning of life or end of days.

Q. How then could he be our Redeemer, and the promised seed of the woman?

A. The Son of God, in the fulness of time, by the miracles of his

mercy, took upon him human nature, and united it after a wonderful manner to his Godhead; so that he was both God and man. He was born of a virgin, who conceived him not by any natural means, but by the power of the Holy Ghost, and was called Jesus Christ; and his mother's name was Mary, of the seed of Abraham, of the family of David. And all these things came to pass when Augustus Cæsar was lord of the Roman Empire.

Q. How did Jesus Christ work this promised redemption for us?

A. By his holy and humble life, and his obedient dying a painful death for us upon the cross.

Q. What benefit do we receive by the life and death of Jesus Christ?

A. We are instructed by his doctrine, and encouraged by his excellent example; we are reconciled to God by his death: he hath given us an excellent law, and glorious promises; and himself hath received power to make good all these promises to his servants, and fearfully to destroy them that will not have him to reign over them.

Q. What promises hath Jesus Christ made us in the gospel?

A. He hath promised to give us all that we need in this life; that everything will work together for our good; that he will be with us in tribulation and persecution. He hath promised his graces, and his Holy Spirit, to enable us to do our duty; and if we make use of these graces he hath promised to give us more. He hath promised to forgive us our sins; to hear our prayers; to take the sting of death from us; to keep our souls in safe custody after death, and in his due time to raise our bodies from the grave, and to join them to our souls, and to give us eternal life, and joys that shall never cease.

Q. How is Jesus Christ able to do all this for us?

A. When he had suffered death, and was buried three days, God raised him up again, and gave him all power in heaven and earth, made him head of the church, Lord of men and angels, and the Judge of the quick and dead.

Q. By what means doth Jesus Christ our Lord convey all these blessings to us?

A. Jesus Christ had three offices, and in all he was Mediator between God and man; he is our prophet, our priest, and our king.

Q. What was his office as he was a prophet?

A. This office he finished on earth; beginning when he was thirty years old to preach the gospel of the kingdom, faith and repentance.

Q. When began his priestly office? and wherein doth it consist?

A. It began at his death; for he was himself the priest and the sacrifice, offering himself upon the altar of the cross, for the sins of all the world.

Q. Did his priestly office then cease?

A. No: he is a priest for ever; that is, unto the end of the world, and represents the same sacrifice to God in heaven, interceding and praying continually for us in the virtue of that sacrifice, by which he obtains relief of all our necessities.

Q. What doth Christ in heaven pray for on our behalf?

A. That our sins may be pardoned, our infirmities pitied, our necessities relieved, our persons defended, our temptations overcome, that we may be reconciled to God and be saved.

Q. How is Jesus Christ also our King?

A. When he arose from his grave, and had for forty days together conversed with his disciples, "showing himself alive by many infallible tokens," he ascended into heaven, and there sits at the right hand of God, all things being made subject to him, angels, and men, and devils, heaven and earth, the elements, and all the creatures; and over all he reigns, comforting and defending his elect, subduing the power of the devil, taking out the sting of death, and making all to serve the glory of God, and to turn to the good of his elect.

Q. How long must this kingdom last?

A. Till Christ has brought all his enemies under his feet; that is, till the day of judgment: in which day shall be performed the greatest acts of his kingly power; for then he shall quite conquer death, triumph over the devils, throw his enemies into hell fire, and carry all his elect to never-ceasing glories; and then he shall deliver up the kingdom to his Father, that God may be all in all.

Q. How is Christ a Mediator in all these offices?

A. A Mediator signifies one that stands between God and us. As Christ is a prophet, so he taught us his Father's will, and ties us to obedience: As he is a priest he is our Redeemer, having paid a price for us, even his most precious blood; and our advocate, pleading for us, and mediating our pardon and salvation; as he is a King, so he is our Lord, our Patron, and our Judge; yet it is the kingdom of a Mediator, that is, in order to the world to come; but then to determine and end. And in all these he hath made a covenant between God and us of an everlasting interest.

Q. What is the covenant which

Jesus Christ our Mediator hath made between God and us?

A. That God will write his laws in our hearts, and will pardon us, and defend us, and raise us up again at the last day, and give us an inheritance in his kingdom.

Q. To what conditions hath he bound us on our parts?

A. Faith and repentance.

Q. When do we enter into his covenant?

A. In our baptism, and at our ripe years, when we understand the secrets of the kingdom of Christ, and undertake willingly what in our names was undertaken for us in our infancy.

Q. What is the covenant of faith which we enter into in baptism?

A. We promise to believe, that Jesus Christ is the Messias, or he that was come into the world; that he is the anointed of the Lord, or the Lord's Christ; that he is the Son of God, and the Son of the Virgin Mary; that he is God incarnate, or God manifested in the flesh; that he is the Mediator between God and man; that he died for us upon the cross, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven, and shall be there till the day of judgment; that then he shall be our judge; in the mean time he is King of the world, and head of the church.

Q. What is the covenant of repentance?

A. We promise to leave all our sins, and with a hearty and sincere endeavour to give up our will and affections to Christ, and do what he hath commanded, according to our power and weakness.

Q. How if we fail of this promise, through infirmity, and commit sin?

A. Still we are within the covenant of repentance; that is, within the promise of pardon, and possibility of returning from dead works, and mortifying our lusts: and though this be done after the manner of men; that is, in weakness, and with some failings; yet our endeavour must be hearty, and constant, and diligent, and our watchfulness and prayers for pardon must be lasting and persevering.

Q. What ministries hath Christ appointed to help us in this duty?

A. The ministry of the word and sacraments, which he will accompany with his grace and his spirit.

Q. What is a sacrament?

A. An outward ceremony ordained by Christ, to be a sign and a means of conveying his grace unto us.

Q. How many sacraments are ordained by Christ?

A. Two: baptism, and the supper of our Lord.

Q. What is baptism?

A. An outward washing of the body in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; in which we are buried with Christ in his death, after a sacramental manner; and are made partakers of Christ's death, and of his resurrection; teaching us, that we should rise from the death of sin, to the life of righteousness.

Q. What is the sacrament of the Lord's supper?

A. A ceremony of eating bread, and drinking wine, being blessed and consecrated by God's minister in public assemblies, in remembrance of Christ's death and passion.

Q. What benefits are done unto us by this sacrament?

A. Our souls are nourished by the body and blood of Christ, our bodies are sealed to a blessed resurrection, and to immortality; our infirmities are strengthened, our graces increased, our pardon made more certain: and when we present ourselves to God, having received Christ's body within us, we are sure to be accepted; and all the good prayers we make to God for ourselves and others, are sure to be heard.

Q. Who are fit to receive this sacrament?

A. None but baptized Christians, and such as repent of their sins, and heartily purpose to lead a good life.

Q. What other ministries hath Christ ordained in his church, to help us, and to bring so many great purposes to pass?

A. Jesus Christ hath appointed ministers and ambassadors of his own to preach his word to us, to pray for us, to exhort and to reprove, to comfort and instruct, to restore and reconcile us, if we be overtaken in a fault; to visit the sick; to separate the vile from the precious, to administer the sacraments, and to watch for the good of our souls.

Q. What are we tied to perform towards them?

A. To pay them honour and maintenance, to obey them in all things according to the gospel, and to order ourselves so, that they may give account of our souls with cheerfulness and joy.

Q. Which are the commandments and laws of Jesus Christ?

A. They are many, but easy; holy, but very pleasant to all good minds, to such as desire to live well in this world, and in the world to come: and they are set down in the sermons of our blessed Lord, and of his apostles, but especially in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of St. Matthew.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe in God.

I believe that there is a God, who is one, true, supreme, and alone infinitely wise, just, good, free, eternal, immense, and blessed; and in him alone we are to put our trust.

The Father Almighty.

I believe that he is, 1. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and 2, of all that believe in him, whom he hath begotten by his word, and adopted to the inheritance of sons; and because he is our Father, he will do us all that good to which we are created, and designed by grace; and because he is Almighty, he is able to perform it: and therefore we may safely believe in him, and rely upon him.

Maker of Heaven and Earth.

He made the sun and the moon, the stars, and all the regions of glory; he made the air, the earth, and the water, and all that live in them; he made angels and men: and he who made them, does, and he only can preserve them in the same being, and thrust them forwards to a better. He that preserves them does also govern them, and intends they should minister to his glory: and therefore we are to do worship and obedience to him in all that we can, and that he hath commanded.

And in Jesus Christ.

I also believe in Jesus Christ, who is, and is called a Saviour, and the anointed of the Lord, promised to the Patriarchs, whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit, and with power to become the great Prophet, and declarer of his Father's will to all the world, telling us how God will be worshipped and served; he is anointed to be the Mediator of the New Covenant, and our high-priest, reconciling us to his Father by the sacrifice of himself; and to be the great king of all the world. And by this article we are Christians, who serve and worship God the Father through Jesus Christ.

His only Son.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God he alone, of him alone. For God,

Death of Nelson

by his Holy Spirit, caused him to be born of a Virgin: by his power he raised him from the dead, and gave him a new birth or being in the body: he gave him all power and all excellency: and beyond all this, he is the express image of his person, the brightness of his glory, equal to God, beloved before the beginning of the world, of a nature perfectly divine, very God by essence, and very man by assumption; as God, all one in nature with the Father; and as man, one person in himself.

Our Lord.

Jesus Christ, God's only Son, is the heir of all things and persons in his Father's house: all angels and men are his servants, and all creatures obey him. We are to believe in him; and by faith in him only, and in his name we shall be saved.

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost.

I believe that Jesus Christ was not begotten of a man, nor born by natural means; but that a divine power from God, (God's Holy Spirit) did overshadow the Virgin Mother of Christ, and made her in a wonderful manner to conceive Jesus in her womb; and by this his admirable manner of being conceived, he was the Son of God alone, and no man was his Father.

Born of the Virgin Mary.

Though God was his Father, and he begat him by the power of the Holy Ghost, and caused him miraculously to begin in the womb of his Mother, yet from her he also derived his human nature, and by his mother he was of the family of King David, and called the Son of Man: his Mother being an holy person, not chosen to this great honour for her wealth or beauty, but by the good will of God, and because she was of rare exemplary modesty and humility; and she received the honour of being a Mother to the Son of God, and ever a Virgin, and all generations shall call her blessed.

Suffered under Pontius Pilate.

After that Jesus passed through the state of infancy and childhood, being subject to his parents, and working in an humble trade, to serve his own and his Mother's needs, he grew to the estate of a man: he began to preach at the age of thirty years; and having for about three years and a half preached the gospel, and taught us his Father's will, having spoken the gospel of his kingdom, and

revealed to us the secrets of eternal life, and resurrection of the dead, regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, perfect remission of sins, and eternal judgment; at last, that he might reconcile the world to his Father, he became a sacrifice for all our sins, and suffered himself to be taken by the malicious Jews, and put to a painful and shameful death; they being envious at him for the number of his disciples, and the reputation of his person, the innocence of his life, the mightiness of the miracles, and the power of his doctrine. And this death he suffered when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea.

Was crucified.

Jesus Christ being taken by the rulers of the Jews, bound and derided, buffeted and spit upon, accused weakly, and persecuted violently; at last wanting matter and pretences to condemn him, they asked him of his person and office; and because he affirmed that great truth, which all the world of good men longed for, that he was the Messias, and designed to sit on the right hand of the majesty on high, they resolved to call it blasphemy, and delivered him over to Pilate, and by importunity and threats forced him, against his conscience, to give him up to be scourged, and then to be crucified. The soldiers therefore mocking him with a robe and a reed, and pressing a crown of thorns upon his head, led him to the place of his death, compelling him to bear his cross, to which they presently nailed him; on which for three hours he hung in extreme torture, being a sad spectacle of the most afflicted and the most innocent person of the whole world.

Dead.

When the holy Jesus was wearied with tortures, and he knew all things were now fulfilled, and his Father's wrath appeased towards mankind, his Father pitying his innocent Son, groaning under such intolerable miseries, hastened his death; and Jesus commending his spirit into the hands of his Father, cried with a loud voice, bowed his head, and died; and by his death sealed all the doctrines and revelations which he first taught the world and then confirmed by his blood. He was consecrated our merciful high-priest, and, by a feeling of our miseries and temptations, became able to help them that are tempted; and for these his sufferings, was exalted to the highest throne and seat of the right hand of God; and hath shewn that to heaven there is no surer way, than suffering for his name: and hath taught us willingly

to suffer for his sake, what himself hath already suffered for ours. He reconciled us to God by his death, led us to God, drew us to himself, redeemed us from all iniquity, purchased us for his Father, and for ever made us his servants and redeemed ones, that we being dead unto sin, might live unto God. And this death being so highly beneficial to us, he hath appointed means to apply to us, and to represent to God for us in the holy sacrament of his last supper. And upon all these considerations, that cross which was a smart and shame to our Lord, is honour to us; and as it turned to his glory, so also to our spiritual advantages.

And buried.

That he might suffer every thing of human nature, he was, by the care of his friends and disciples, by the leave of Pilate taken from the cross, and embalmed, (as the manner of the Jews was to bury) and wrapped in linen, and buried in a new cave hewn out of a rock: and this was the last and lowest step of his humiliation.

He descended into hell.

That is, he went down into the lower parts of the earth, (as himself called it) into the heart of the earth. By which phrase the scripture understands, the state of separation, or of souls severed from their bodies. By this his descending to the land of darkness, where all things are forgotten, he sanctified the state of death and separation, that none of his servants might ever after fear the jaws of death and hell, whither he went, not to suffer torment, (because he finished all that upon the cross), but to triumph over the gates of hell, to verify his death, and the event of his sufferings, and to break the iron bars of those lower prisons, that they may open and shut hereafter only at his command.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

After Lord Jesus had abode in the grave the remaining part of the day of his passion, and all the next day, early in the morning upon the third day, by the power of God, he was raised from death and hell to light and life, never to return to death any more, and is become the first-born from the dead, the first-fruits of them that slept; and although he was put to death in the flesh, yet now, being quickened in the spirit, he lives for ever. And as we all die in Adam, so in Christ we all shall be made alive: but every man in his own order: Christ is the first; and we, if we follow him in

the regeneration, shall also follow him in the resurrection.

He ascended into heaven.

When our dearest Lord was risen from the grave he conversed with his disciples for forty days together, often showing himself alive by infallible proofs, and once to five hundred of his disciples at one appearing. Having spoken to them fully concerning the affairs of the kingdom, and the promise of the Father, leaving them some few things in charge for the present, he solemnly gave them his blessing, and in the presence of his apostles was taken up into heaven by a bright cloud and the ministry of angels; being gone before us to prepare a place for us above all heavens, in the presence of his Father, and at the foot of the throne of God. From which glorious presence we cannot be kept by the change of death and the powers of the grave, nor the depth of hell, nor the height of heaven; but Christ being lifted up, shall draw all his servants unto him.

And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

I believe that Jesus Christ sitteth in heaven above all principalities and powers, being exalted above every name that is named in heaven and earth; that is, above every creature above and below; all things being put under his feet. That he is always in the presence of his Father interceding for us; and governs all things in heaven and earth, that he may defend his church, and adorn her with his spirit, and procure and effect her eternal salvation. There he sits and reigns as king, and intercedes as our high-priest. He is a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true "tabernacle which God made, and not man; the author and finisher of our faith, the captain of our salvation, the great apostle of our religion, the great bishop of our souls," the head of the church, and the Lord of heaven and earth. And therefore to him we are to pay divine worship, service and obedience; and we must believe in him, and in God by him; and rely entirely on the mercies of God, through Jesus Christ.

From thence he shall come,

In the clouds, shining and adorned with the glory of his Father, attended by millions of bright angels, with the voice of an archangel, and a shout of all the heavenly army, the trump of God. And every eye shall see him; and they that pierced his hands and his feet shall behold his

majesty, his terror, and his glory; and all the families of the earth shall tremble at his presence, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and the whole earth and the sea shall be broken in pieces and confusion; for then he shall come to put an end to this world, and

To judge the Quick and the Dead.

"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath given all judgment to his Son." And at this day of judgment the Lord Jesus shall sit in the air, in a glorious throne; and the angels having gathered together God's elect from the four corners of the world, all the kindreds of the earth being brought before the judgment seat, shall have the records of their conscience laid open; that is, all that ever they thought, or spake, or did, shall be brought to their memory, to convince the wicked of the justice of the Judge in passing the fearful sentence upon them, and glorify the mercies of God towards his redeemed ones: and then the righteous Judge shall condemn the wicked to the portion of devils for ever, to a state of torments, the second and eternal and intolerable death; and the godly being placed on his right hand shall hear the blessed sentence of absolution, and shall be led by Christ to the participation of the glories of his Father's kingdom for ever and ever. Amen.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; or, the Holy Spirit.

Who is the third person of the holy, and undivided, ever-blessed Trinity; which I worship, and adore, and admire, but look upon with wonder, and am not in a capacity to understand. I believe that the Holy Spirit, into whose name, as of the Father and the Son, I was baptised, is the heavenly author, the captain, the teacher, and the witness of all the truths of the gospel: that as the Father sent the Son, so the Son from heaven sent the Holy Spirit, to lead the church into all truth, to assist us in all temptations, and to help us in the purchase of all virtue. This Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, and our Lord Jesus received him from his Father, and sent him into the world, who, receiving the things of Christ and declaring the same excellent doctrines, speaks whatsoever he hath heard from him; and instructed the apostles, and builds the church, and produces faith, and confirms our hope, and increases charity. And this Holy Spirit our blessed Lord hath left with his church for ever; by which all the servants of God are en-

abled to do all things necessary to salvation, which by the force of nature they cannot do: and we speak by the Spirit, and work by the Spirit, when by his assistances any ways imparted to us, we speak or do anything of our duty. He it is who enlightens our understanding, sanctifies our will, orders and commands our affections; he comforts our sorrows, supports our spirits in trouble, and enables us by promises and confidences, and gifts, to suffer for the Lord Jesus and the gospel. And all these things God the Father does for us by his Son, and the Son by the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit, by all means within and without, which are operative upon, and proportionable to, the nature of reasonable creatures. This is he who works miracles, gives the gifts of prophecy and of interpretation; that teaches us what and how to pray, that gives us zeal and holy desires; who sanctifies children in baptism, and confirms them with his grace in confirmation, and reproves the world, and consecrates bishops and all the ministers of the gospel, and absolves the penitent, and blesses the obedient, and comforts the sick, and excommunicates the refractory, and makes intercession for the saints; that is, the church, and those whom he hath blessed, appointed and sanctified to these purposes, do all these ministries by his authority, and his commandment, and his aids. This is he that testifies to our spirits that we are the sons of God, and that makes us to cry, Abba Father; that is, who inspires into us such humble confidences of our being accepted in our hearty and constant endeavours to please God, that we can with cheerfulness and joy call God our Father, and expect and hope for the portion of sons, both here and hereafter; and in the certainty of this hope, to work out our salvation with fear and reverence, with trembling and joy, with distrust of ourselves, and mighty confidence in God. By this holy and ever blessed Spirit, several persons in the church, and every man in his proportion, receives the gift of wisdom, and utterance, and knowledge, and interpretation, and prophecy, and healing, and government, and discerning of spirits, and faith, and tongues, and whatsoever can be necessary for the church in several ages and periods; for her beginning, for her continuance, for her in prosperity, and for her in persecution. This is the great promise of the Father, and it is the gift of God, which he will give to all them that ask him, and who live piously and chastely, and are persons fit to entertain so divine a grace. This Holy Spirit God gives to some more,

to some less, according as they are capable. They who obey his motions, and love his presence, and improve his gifts, shall have him yet more abundantly: but they that grieve the Holy Spirit, shall lose that which they have, and they that extinguish him belong not to Christ, but are in a state of reprobation; and they that blaspheme this Holy Spirit, and call him the spirit of the devil, or the spirit of error or folly, or do malicious despites to him; that is, they who on purpose considering and choosing, do him hurt by word or by deed (so far as lies in them) shall for ever be separated from the presence of God, and of Christ; and shall never be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come. Lastly, this Holy Spirit seals us to the day of redemption; that is, God gives us his Holy Spirit, as a testimony that he will raise us again at the last day, and give us a portion in the glories of his kingdom, in the inheritance of our Lord Jesus.

The holy Catholic Church.

I believe that there is and ought to be, a visible company of men professing the service and discipline, that is, the religion of the gospel; who agree together in the belief of all the truths of God, revealed by Jesus Christ, and in confession of the articles of this creed, and agree together in praying and praising God, through Jesus Christ, to read and hear the Scriptures read and expounded; to provoke each other to love and to good works, to advance the honour of Christ, and to propagate his faith and worship. I believe this to be an holy church, spiritual, and not civil and secular, but sanctified by their profession, and the solemn rites of it; professing holiness, and separating from the evil manners of heathens and wicked persons, by their laws and institutions. And this church is catholic; that is, it is not confined to the nation of the Jews, as was the old religion, but it is gathered out of all nations, and is not of a differing faith in differing places, but always did, doth, and ever shall profess the faith which the apostles preached, and which is contained in this creed, which whoever believes, is a catholic, and a christian; and he that believes not is neither. This catholic church I believe, that is, I believe whatsoever all good christians in all ages, and in all places, did confess to be the catholic and apostolic faith.

The communion of Saints.

That is, the communion of all christians, because, by reason of their holy faith, they are called

saints in scripture, as being begotten by God into a lively faith, and cleansed by believing; and by this faith, and the profession of an holy life in obedience to Jesus Christ, they are separated from the world, called to the knowledge of the truth, justified before God, and endued with the holy spirit of grace, foreknown from the beginning of the world, and predestinated by God to be made conformable to the image of his Son, here in holiness of life, hereafter in a life of glory: and they who are saints in their belief and profession, must be so also in their practice and conversation, that so they may make their calling and election sure, lest they be saints only in name and title, in their profession and institution, and not in manners and holiness of living; that is, lest they be so before men, and not before God. I believe that all people, who desire the benefit of the gospel, are bound to have fellowship and society with these saints, and communicate with them in their holy things, in their faith, and in their hope, and in their sacraments, and in their prayers, and in their public assemblies, and in their government; and must do to them all the acts of charity and mutual help which they can and are required to; and without this communion of saints, a conjunction with them who believe in God, through Jesus Christ, there is no salvation to be expected; which communion must be kept in inward things always, and in all persons, and testified by outward acts always, when it is possible, and may be done upon just and holy conditions.

The forgiveness of sins.

I believe that all the sins I committed before I came to the knowledge of the truth, and all the slips of human infirmity, against which we heartily pray, and watch, and labour, and all the evil habits of which we repent so timely and effectually, that we obtain their contrary graces and live in them, are fully remitted by the blood of Christ: which forgiveness we obtain by faith and repentance: and therefore are not justified by the righteousness of works, but by the righteousness of faith; and we are preserved in the state of forgiveness or justification by the fruits of a lively faith, and a timely active repentance.

The resurrection of the body.

I believe that at the last day all they whose sins are forgiven, and who lived and died in the communion of saints, and in whom the holy Spirit did dwell, shall rise from their graves: their dead bones shall live and be



Prayer.

clothed with flesh and skin; and their bodies, together with their souls, shall enter into the portion of a new life; and that this body shall no more see corruption, but shall rise to an excellent condition; it shall be spiritual, powerful, immortal and glorious, like unto his glorious body, who shall then be our Judge, is now our Advocate, our Saviour and our Lord.

And the life everlasting.

I believe that they who have their part in this resurrection shall meet the Lord in the air; when the blessed sentence is pronounced upon them, they shall, and for ever, be with the Lord, in joys unspeakable, and full of glory. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, there shall be no fear of sorrow, no mourning or death, a friend shall never go away from thence, and an enemy shall never enter; there shall be fulness without want—light eternal brighter than the sun—day and no night—joy and no weeping—difference in degree, and yet all full—there is love without dissimulation—excellency without envy—multitudes without confusion—music without discord—there the understandings are rich, the will is satisfied, the affections are all love, and all joy, and they shall reign with God and Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

AGENDA:

OR,

THINGS TO BE DONE.

THE DIARY:

Or, a Rule to spend each day religiously.

I. Suppose every day to be a day of business; for your whole life is a race and a battle, a merchandise and a journey: every day propound to yourself a rosary or a chaplet of good works, to present to God at night.

II. Rise as soon as your health and other occasions shall permit; but it is good to be as regular as

you can, and as early. Remember, he that rises first to prayer, hath a more early title to a blessing: but he that changes night into day, labour into idleness, watchfulness into sleep, changes his hopes of a blessing into a dream.

III. Never let any one think it an excuse to lie in bed because he hath nothing to do when he is up: for whosoever hath a soul, and hopes to save that soul, hath work enough to do "to make his calling and election sure," to serve God, and to pray; to read and to meditate; to repent, and amend; to do good to others, and to keep evil from themselves. And if thou hast little to do, thou oughtest to employ the more time in laying up for a greater crown of glory.

IV. At your opening your eyes, enter upon the day with some act of piety.

1. Of thanksgiving for the preservation of you the last night.

2. Of the glorification of God for the works of the creation, or any thing for the honour of God.

V. When you first go off from your bed, solemnly and devoutly bow your head, and worship the holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost.

VI. When you are making ready, be as silent as you can, and spend your time in holy thoughts; there being no way left to redeem that time from loss, but by meditation, and short mental prayers. If you choose to speak, speak something of God's praises; of his goodness, his mercies, or his greatness: ever resolving, that the first fruits of thy reason, and of all thy faculties, shall be presented to God, to sanctify the whole harvest of thy conversation.

VII. Be not curious nor careless in your habit, but always keep these measures:

1. Be not troublesome to thyself or to others, by unhandsomeness or uncleanness.

2. Let it be according to your state and quality.

3. Make religion to be the difference of your habit, so as to be best attired upon holy or festival days.

VIII. In your dressing let there be ejaculations fitted to the several actions of dressing, as at washing your hands and face, pray God to cleanse your soul from sin; in putting on your clothes, pray him to clothe your soul with the righteousness of your Saviour: and so in all the rest.

For religion must not only be the garment of your soul to invest it all over: but it must be also as the fringes to every of your actions, that something of religion appear in every one of them, besides the innocence of all of them.

IX. As soon as you are dressed with the first preparation of your clothes, that you can decently do it, kneel and say the Lord's prayer; then rise from your knees, and do what is necessary for you in order to your further dressing, or affairs of the house, which is speedily to be done; and then finish your dressing according to the foregoing rules.

X. When you are dressed, retire yourself to your closet, and go to your usual devotions; which it is good that at the first prayers they were divided into seven actions of piety:

1. An act of adoration.
2. Of thanksgiving.
3. Of oblation.
4. Of confession.
5. Of petition.
6. Of intercession.
7. Of meditation; or serious, deliberate, useful reading of the holy Scriptures.

XI. I advise that your reading should be governed by these measures:

1. Let it not be of the whole Bible in order; but for your devotion use the New Testament, and such portions of the Old as contain the precepts of a holy life.

2. The historical and less useful part, let it be read at such other times, which you have of leisure from your domestic employments.

3. Those portions of Scripture which you use in your prayers, let them not be long; a chapter at once, no more. But then, what time you can afford, spend it in thinking and meditating upon the holy precepts which you read.

4. Be sure to meditate so long till you make some act of piety upon the occasion of what you meditate; either that you get some new arguments against a sin, or some new encouragements to virtue; some spiritual strength and advantage, or else some act of prayer to God or glorification of him.

5. I advise that you would read your chapter in the midst of your prayers in the morning, if they be divided according to the number of the former actions; because little interruptions will be apt to make your prayers less tedious, and yourself more intent upon them. But if you find any other way more agreeing to your spirit and disposition, use your liberty without scruple.

XII. Before you go forth of your closet, after your prayers are done, set yourself down a little while, and consider what you have to do that day; what matter of business is like to employ you, or to tempt you, and take particular resolution against that, whether it be matter of wrangling, or anger, or covetousness, or vain courtship, or feasting; and when

you enter upon it, remember upon what you resolved in your closet. If you are likely to have nothing extraordinary that day, a general recommendation of the affairs of that day to God in your prayers will be sufficient, but if there be anything foreseen that is not usual, be sure to be armed for it by an hearty though a short prayer, and an earnest prudent resolution beforehand, and then watch when the thing comes.

XIII. Whosoever hath children or servants, let him or her take care that all the children and servants of the family say their prayers before they begin their work. The Lord's Prayer and the Ten commandments, with the short verse at the end of every commandment, which the church uses, and the creed is a very good office for them, if they be not fitted for more regular offices. And to these also it were good that some proper prayer were apportioned, and they taught it. It were well if they would serve themselves of this form set down at the end of this diary.

XIV. Then go about the affairs of your house and proper employment; ever avoiding idleness, or too much earnestness of affection upon the things of the world: do your business prudently, temperately, diligently, humbly, charitably.

XV. Let there be no idle person in or about your family, of beggars, or unemployed servants; but find them all work and meat; call upon them carefully; reprove them without reproaches or fierce railings. Be a master or a mistress, and a friend to them; and exact of them to be faithful and diligent.

XVI. In your servants suffer any offence against yourself than against God; endure not that they should swear, or lie, or steal, or be wanton, or curse each other, or be railers, or slanderers, or tell-tales, or sowers of dissension in the family, or amongst neighbours.

XVII. In all your intercourse with your neighbours in the day, let your affairs be wholly matter of business or civility, and always managed with justice and charity: neither let it be matter of curiosity, or inquiry into the actions of others: always without censuring, or rash judgment; without backbiting, slandering, or detraction: do it not yourself, neither converse with them that do. He or she that loves talebearers shall never be beloved, or be innocent.

XVIII. Before dinner and supper, as often as it is convenient, or can be had, let the public prayers of the church, or some parts of them, be said publicly in the family; and let as many be present as you

can. The same rule is also to be observed for Sundays and holy-days, for their going to church. Let no servant be always detained, but relieved and provided for by changes.

XIX. Let your meal be temperate and wholesome, according to your quality, and the season; begun and ended with prayer, and be sure, that in the course of your meal, and before you rise, you recollect yourself, and send your heart up to God with some holy and short ejaculation; remembering your duty, fearing to offend, or desiring or sighing after the eternal supper of the Lamb.

XX. After meal use what innocent refreshment you please, to refresh your mind or body with these measures.

1. Let it not be too expensive of them.

2. Let it not hinder your devotion, nor your business.

3. Let it be always without violence or passion.

4. Let it not then wholly take you up when you are at it; but let your heart retire with some holy thoughts and sober recollections, lest your mind be seized upon by it, and your affections carried off from better things; secure your affections for God, and sober and severe employments. Here you may be refreshed; but take heed you neither dwell here, nor sin here. It is better never to use recreation than at any time to sin by it: but you may use recreation and avoid sin: and that is the best temper. But if you cannot do both, be more careful of your soul than of your refreshment; and that is the best security. But then, in what you use to sin, carefully avoid it, and change your refreshment for some other instance, in which you can be more innocent.

XXI. Entertain no long discourse with any, but, if you can bring in something to season it with religion, as God must be in all your thoughts, so, if it be possible, let him be in all your discourses; at least let him be at one end of it; and when you can speak of him, be sure you forget not to think of him.

XXII. Toward the declining of the day be sure to retire to your private devotions: read, meditate, and pray. In which I propound to you this method:—On the Lord's day meditate of the glories of the creation, of the works of God, and all his benefits to mankind, and to you in particular. Then let your devotion be, humbly upon your knees, to say over the 8th and 9th Psalms, and sometimes the 104th, with proper collects, which you shall find or get; adding the form of thanksgiving, which is in the rule of "Holy Living," in the manner

as is there directed; or some other of your own choosing.

Meditate, on Monday, on death; on Tuesday, on judgment; Wednesday, on heaven; Thursday, on hell; saying your usual prayers and adding some ejaculations or short sayings of your own, according to the matter of your own devotion.

On Friday recollect your sins that you have done that week, and all your life-time; and let your devotion be to recite humbly and devoutly some penitential litanies; whereof you may serve yourself in the rule of "Holy Living."

On Saturday, at the same time, meditate on the passion of our blessed Saviour, and all the mysteries of our redemption, which you may do, and pray together, by using the forms made to that purpose in the rule of "Holy Living." In all your devotions begin and end with the Lord's prayer.

Upon these two days and Sunday you may choose some portions out of the "Life of Christ," to read and help your meditation, proper to the mysteries you are appointed to meditate or any other devout books.

XXIII. Read not much at a time; but meditate as much as your time and capacity, and disposition will give you leave: ever remembering, that little reading and much thinking; little speaking, and much hearing; frequent and short prayers and great devotion, is the best way to be wise, to be holy, to be devout.

XXIV. Before you go to bed bethink yourself of the day past. If nothing extraordinary hath happened, your conscience is the sooner examined; but if you have had any difference or disagreeing with any one, or a great feast, or great company, or a great joy, or a great sorrow, then recollect yourself with the more diligence; ask pardon for what is amiss; give God thanks for what was good. If you have omitted any duty, make amends next day; and yet, if nothing be found that was amiss, be humbled still, and thankful; and pray God for pardon, if anything be amiss that you know not of. If all these things be in your offices for your last prayers, be sure to apply them according to what you find in your examination: but if they be not, supply them with short ejaculations before you begin your last prayers, or at the end of them. Remember also, and be sure to take notice of all the mercies and deliverances of yourself and your relatives that day.

XXV. As you are going to bed, as often as you can conveniently, or that you are not hindered by company, meditate of death, and the preparations to your grave. When you lie down close your eyes with

a short prayer, commit yourself into the hands of your faithful Creator: and when you have done, trust him with yourself, as you must do when you are dying.

XXVI. If you awake in the night, fill up the intervals or spaces of your not sleeping by holy thoughts and aspirations; and remember the sins of your youth, and sometimes remember your death, and that you shall die; and pray to God to send to you and all mankind a mercy in the day of judgment.

XXVII. Upon the holy days observe the same rules; only let the matter of your meditations be according to the mystery of the day. As upon Christmas-day, meditate on the birth of our blessed Saviour; and read the story and considerations which are in "The Life of Christ:" and to your ordinary devotions of every day, add the prayer which is fitted to the mystery; which you shall find in the "Life of Christ," or the rule of "Holy Living." Upon the day of the Annunciation, or our Lady-day, meditate on the incarnation of our blessed Saviour: and so upon all the festivals of the year.

XXVIII. Set apart one day for fasting once a week, or once a fortnight, or once a month at least: but let it be with these cautions and measures:

1. Do not choose a festival of the church for your fasting day.

2. Eat nothing till your afternoon devotions be done, if the health of your body will permit it: if not, take something, though it be the less.

3. When you eat your meal, let it be no more than ordinary, lest your fasting-day end in an intemperate evening.

4. Let the actions of all the day be proportionable to it: abstain from your usual recreations on that day, and from greater mirth.

5. Be sure to design beforehand the purposes of your fast, either for repentance or for mortification, or for the advantages of prayer; and let your devotions be accordingly. But be sure not to think fasting, or eating fish, or eating nothing, of itself, to be pleasing to God—but as it serves to one of those purposes.

6. Let some part of that day extraordinary be set apart for prayer, for the actions of repentance, for confession of sins, and for begging of those graces for whose sake you set apart that day.

7. Be sure that on that day you set apart something for the poor; for fasting and alms are the wings of prayer.

8. It is best to choose that day for your fast, which is used generally by all Christians; as Friday

and Saturday: but do not call it a fasting-day, unless also it be a day of extraordinary devotion and of alms.

XXIX. From observation of all the days of your life gather out the four extraordinaries,

1. All the great and shameful sins you have committed.

2. All the excellent or greater acts of piety, which by God's grace you have performed.

3. All the great blessings you have received.

4. All the danger and great sicknesses you have escaped; and upon all the days of your extraordinary devotion, let them be brought forth, and produce their acts of virtue:

(1.) Repentance, and prayers for pardon.

(2.) Resolutions to proceed, and increase in good works.

(3.) Thanksgiving to God.

(4.) Fear and watchfulness, lest we fall into worse, as a punishment for sin.

XXX. Keep a little catalogue of these; and at the foot of them set down what promises and vows you have made and kept, or broken; and do according as you are obliged.

XXXI. Receive the blessed sacrament as often as you can: endeavour to have it once a month, besides the solemn and great festivals of the year.

XXXII. Confess your sins often, hear the word of God, make religion the business of your life, your study and chiefest care; and be sure that in all things a spiritual guide take you by the hand.

Thou shalt always rejoice in the evening, if thou dost spend the day virtuously.



Ruth Gleaning.

Ruth.II.8.

A MANUAL OF DAILY PRAYERS,

FITTED TO

THE DAYS OF THE WEEK.

SUNDAY.

Decad the first.

1. It is the highest wisdom, by despising the world, to arrive at heaven: for they are blessed whose daily exercise it is to converse with God by prayer and obedience, by love and patience.

2. It is the extremest folly to labour for that which will bring torment in the end, and not satisfaction in the little enjoyment of it. To be unwearied in the pursuit of the world, and to be soon tired in whatsoever we begin to do for Christ.

3. Watch over thyself, counsel thyself, reprove thyself, censure thyself, and judge thyself impartially: whatever thou dost to others, do not neglect thyself; for every man profits so much as he does violence to himself.

4. They that follow their own sensuality, stain their consciences, and lose the grace of God; but he that endeavours to please God, whatever he suffers, is beloved of God. For it is not a question whether we shall or shall not suffer; but, whether we shall suffer for God, or for the world; whether we shall take pains in religion, or in sin—to get heaven, or to get riches.

5. What availeth knowledge, without the fear of God? an humble ignorant man is better than a proud scholar, who studies natural things, and knows not himself. The more thou knowest, the more grievously thou shalt be judged. Many get no profit by their labour, because they contend for knowledge, rather than for holy life: and the time shall come, when it shall more avail thee to have subdued one lust, than to have known all mysteries.

6. No man truly knows himself but he groweth daily more contemptible in his own eyes. Desire not to be known, and to be little esteemed of men.

7. If all be well within, nothing

can hurt us from without: for from inordinate love and vain fear come all unquietness of spirit and distraction of our senses.

8. He to whom all things are one, who draweth all things to one, and seeth all things in one, may enjoy true peace and rest of Spirit.

9. It is not much business that distracts any man but the want of purity, constancy, and tendency towards God, Who hinders thee more than the unmortified desires of thine own heart? as soon as ever a man desires anything inordinate, he is presently disquieted in himeslf, He that hath not wholly subdued himself is quickly tempted and overcome in small and trifling things. The weak in spirit is he that is, in a manner, subject to his appetite, and he quickly falls into indignation, and contention, and envy.

10. He is truly great, that is great in charity, and little in himself.

MONDAY.

The Second Decad.

11. We rather often believe and speak evil of others, than good. But they that are truly virtuous do not easily credit evil that is told them of their neighbours. For if others may do amiss, then may these also speak amiss. Man is frail, and prone to evil; and therefore may soon fail in words.

12. Be not rash in thy proceedings, not confident and pertinacious in thy conceits: but consult with him that is wise, and seek to be instructed by a better than thyself.

13. The more humble and resigned we are to God, the more prudent we are in our affairs to men, and peaceable in ourselves.

14. The proud and the covetous can never rest.

15. Be not ashamed to be, or to be esteemed, poor in this world, for he that hears God teaching him, will find that it is the best wisdom to withdraw all our affections from secular honour, and troublesome riches, and to place them upon eternal treasures; and by patience, by humility, by suffering scorn and contempt, and all the will of God, to get the true riches.

16. Be not proud of well-doing, for the judgment of God is far differing from the judgment of men.

17. Lay not thy heart open to every one; but with the wise, and them that fear God. Converse not much with young people and strangers. Flatter not the rich, neither do thou willingly or lightly appear before great personages. Never be partaker with the persecutors.

18. It is easier, and safer, and more pleasant to live in obedience than to be at our own disposing.

19. Always yield to others when there is cause; for that is no shame, but honour: but it is a shame to stand stiff in a foolish or weak argument or resolution.

20. The talk of worldly affairs hindereth much, although recounted with a fair intention. We speak willingly, but seldom return to silence.

TUESDAY.

The third Decad.

21. Watch and pray, lest your time pass without profit or fruits. But devout discourses do greatly further our spiritual progress, if persons of one mind and spirit be gathered together in God.

22. We should enjoy more peace, if we did not busy ourselves with the words and deeds of other men, which appertain not to our charge.

23. He that esteems his progress in religion to consist in exterior observances, his devotion will quickly be at an end; but to free yourselves of passions, is to lay an axe to the root of the tree, and the true way of peace.

24. It is good that we sometimes be contradicted and ill thought of: and that we always bear it well, even when we deserve to be well spoken of. Perfect peace and security cannot be had in this world.

25. All the saints have profited by tribulations: and they that could not bear temptations became reprobates, and fell from God.

26. Think not all is well within when all is well without; or, that they being pleased is a sign that God is pleased; but suspect every thing that is prosperous, unless it promotes piety, and charity, and humility.

27. Do no evil, for no interest, and to please no man, for no friendship, and for no fear.

28. God regards not how much we do, but from how much it proceeds. He does much, that loves much.

29. Patiently suffer that from others, which thou canst not mend in them, until God please to do it for thee. And remember that thou mend thyself, since thou art so willing others should not offend in anything.

30. Every man's virtue is best seen in adversity and temptation.

WEDNESDAY.

The fourth Decad.

31. Begin every day to repent; not that thou shouldest at all defer it, or stand at the door, but because that all is past ought to seem little to thee, because it is so in itself. Begin the next day with the same

zeal, and the same fear, and the same humility, as if thou hadst never begun before.

32. A little omission of any usual exercise of piety cannot happen to thee without some loss and considerable detriment, even though it be upon a considerable cause.

33. Be not slow in common and usual acts of piety and devotion, and quick and prompt at singularities; but having first done what thou art bound to, proceed to counsels and perfections, and the extraordiries of religion as you see cause.

34. He that desires much to hear news, is never void of passions and secular desires, and adherences to the world.

35. Complain not too much of hindrances of devotion; if thou let men alone, they will let thee alone; and if thou desire not to converse with them, let them know it, and they will not desire to converse with thee.

36. Draw not to thyself the affairs of others, neither involve thyself in the suits of parties of great personages.

37. Know that, if any trouble happen to thee, it is what thou hast deserved, and therefore brought upon thyself. But if any comfort come to thee, it is a gift of God, and what thou didst not deserve. And remember, that oftentimes when thy body complains of trouble, it is not so much the greatness of trouble, as littleness of thy spirit that makes thee to complain.

38. He that knows how to suffer anything for God, that desires heartily the will of God may be done in him, that studies to please others rather than himself, to do the will of his superior, not his own, that chooseth the least portion, and is not greedy for the biggest; that takes the lowest place, and does not murmur secretly; he is in the best condition and state of things.

39. Let no man despair of mercy, or success, so long as he hath life and health.

40. Every man must pass through fire and water before he can come to refreshment.

THURSDAY.

The fifth Decad.

41. Soon may a man lose that by negligence, which hath by much labour, and a long time, and a mighty grace, scarcely been obtained; and what shall become of us before night, who are weary so early in the morning? Woe be to that man who would be at rest even when he hath scarcely a footstep of holiness appearing in his conversation.

42. So think, and so do, as if thou wert to die to day, and at night to give an account of thy life.

43. Beg not a long life, but a good one; for length of days oftentimes prolongs the evil, and augments the guilt. It were well, if that little time we live, we would live well.

44. Entertain the same opinions and thoughts of thy sin, and of thy present state, as thou wilt in the day of sorrow. Thou wilt then think thyself very miserable, and very foolish for neglecting one hour and one day of thy salvation; think so now, and thou wilt be more provident of thy time, and of thy talent. For there will be a time come, when every careless man shall desire the respite of an hour for prayer and repentance, and I know not who will grant it. Happy is he that so lives, that in the day of death he rejoices and is not amazed.

45. He that would die comfortably, may serve his ends by first procuring to himself a contempt of the world, a fervent desire of growing in grace, love of discipline, a laborious repentance, a prompt obedience, self-denial, and toleration of every cross accident, for the love of Christ and a tender charity.

46. While thou art well, thou mayest do much good, if thou wilt; but when thou art sick, neither thou nor I can tell what thou shalt be able to do: it is not very much nor very good. Few men mend with sickness, as there are but few who by travel and a wandering life become devout.

47. Be not troubled, nor faint in the labours of mortification, and the austerities of repentance; for in hell one hour is more intolerable, than an hundred years in the house of repentance: and try; for if thou canst not endure God punishing thy follies gently for awhile to amend thee, how wilt thou endure his vengeance for ever to undo thee?

48. In thy prayers wait for God; and think not every hearty prayer can procure everything thou askest. Those things which the saints did not obtain without many prayers and much labour, and showers of tears, and a long protracted watchfulness and industry, do thou expect also in their own time, and by their usual measure. Do thou valiantly, and hope confidently, and wait patiently; and thou shalt find thou wilt not be deceived.

49. Be careful thou dost not speak a lie in thy prayers, which, though not observed, is frequently practised by careless persons, especially in the forms of confession; affirming things which they have not thought; professing sorrow which is not; making a vow they mean not.

50. If thou meanest to be devout, and to enlarge thy religion, do it rather by increasing thy ordinary devotions, than thy extraordinary. For if they be not regular, but come by chance, they will not last long. But if they be added to your ordinary offices, or made to be daily, thy spirit will, by use and custom, be made tender and not willing to do less.

FRIDAY.

The sixth Decad.

51. He is a truly charitable and good man who, when he receives injuries, grieves rather for the malice of him that injures him, than for his own suffering; who willingly prays for him that wrongs him, and from his heart forgives all his faults; who stays not, but quickly asks pardon of others for his errors or mistakes: who sooner shows mercy than anger; who thinks better of others than himself; who offers violence to his appetite, and in all things endeavours to subdue the flesh to the spirit. This is an excellent abbreviature of the whole duty of a Christian.

52. No man can have felicity in two states of things. If he takes it in God here, in him he shall have it hereafter; for God will last for ever. But if he takes felicity in things of this world, where will his felicity be when this world is done? Either here alone, or hereafter must be thy portion.

53. Avoid those things in thyself, which in others do most displease thee; and remember, that as thine eye observes others, so art thou observed by God, by angels, and by men.

54. He that puts his confidence in God only, is neither overjoyed in any great good things of this life, nor sorrowful for a little thing. Let God be thy love and thy fear; and he also will be thy salvation and thy refuge.

55. Do not omit thy prayers for want of a good oratory or place to pray in, nor thy duty for want of temporal encouragements; for he that doth both upon God's account, cares not how or what he suffers, so he suffer well and be the friend of Christ; nor where nor when he suffers, so he may do it frequently, fervently, and acceptably.

56. Very often remember and meditate upon the wounds and stripes, the shame, and the pain, the death and the burial of our Lord Jesus; for nothing will more enable us to bear our cross patiently, injuries charitably, the labour of religion comfortably, and censuring words and detractions with meekness and quietness.

57. Esteem not thyself to have profited in religion, unless thou thinkest well of others, and meanly of thyself; therefore never accuse any but thyself; and he that diligently watches himself, will be willing enough to be silent concerning others.

58. It is no great matter to live lovingly and good-natured, with humble and meek persons; but he that can do so with the froward, with the wilful and the ignorant, with the peevish and perverse, he only hath true charity; always remembering, that our solid true peace, and peace of God, consists rather in complying with others, than in being complied with; in suffering and forbearing, rather than in contention and victory.

59. Simplicity in our intentions, and purity of affections, are the two wings of a soul; investing it with robes and resemblances of a seraphim. Intend the honour of God principally and sincerely, and mingle not thy affections with any creature, but in just subordination to God and to religion, and thou shalt have joy if there be any such thing in this world: for there is no joy but in God, and no sorrow but in an evil conscience.

60. Take not much care what or who is for thee, or against thee: the judgment of none is to be regarded, if God's judgment be otherwise Thou art neither better nor worse in thyself, for any account that is made of thee by any but God alone; secure that to thee, and he will secure all the rest.

SATURDAY.

The seventh Decad.

61. Blessed is he that understands what it is to love Jesus, and contends earnestly to be like him; nothing else can satisfy, or make us perfect. But be thou a bearer of his cross, as well as a lover of his kingdom; suffer tribulation for him, or from him, with the same spirit thou receivest consolation; follow him as well for the bitter cup of his passion, as for the loaves; and remember that if it be an hard saying, "Take up my cross and follow me," it is an harder saying, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."

62. No man can always have the same spiritual pleasures in his prayers; for the greatest saints have sometimes suffered the banishment of the heart, sometimes are fervent, sometimes they feel a barrenness of devotion; for this spirit comes and goes. Rest therefore only in God, and in doing thy duty; and know, that if thou beest overjoyed to-day, this hour will pass away, and temptation and sadness will succeed.

63. In all afflictions seek rather for patience than for comfort: if thou preservest that, this will return. Any man would serve God if he felt pleasure in it always; but the virtuous does it when his soul is full of heaviness, and regards not himself, but God; and hates that consolation that lessens his compunction, but loves anything whereby he is made more humble.

64. That which thou dost not understand when thou readest, thou shalt understand in the day of thy visitation; for there are many secrets of religion which are not perceived till they be felt, and are not felt but in the day of great calamity.

65. He that prays despairs not, but sad is the condition of him that cannot pray: happy are they that can, and do, and love to do it.

66. He that will be pleased in his prayers, must make his prayers his rule. All our duty is there set down, because in all our duty we beg the divine assistance: and remember that you are bound to do all those duties, for the doing of which you have prayed for the divine assistance.

67. By doing actions of religion as often as thou canst, and thy worldly pleasures as seldom; that if thou beest surprised by sudden death, it may be odds but thou mayest be taken at thy prayers.

68. Watch and resist the devil in all his temptations and snares. His chief designs are these; to hinder thy desire in good; to put thee by from thy spiritual employment, from prayers, especially from the meditation of the passion, from the remembrance of thy sins, from humble confession of them, from speedy repentance, from the custody of thy senses and of thy heart, from firm purposes of growing in grace, from reading good books and frequently receiving the holy sacrament. It is all one to him if he deceives thee by a lie or by truth. whether he amaze or trouble thee by love of the present or fear of the future. Watch him but in these things, and there will be no part left unarmed, in which he can wound thee.

69. Remember how the proud are fallen, and they who have presumed upon their own strength have been disgraced; and that the boldest and greatest talkers in the days of peace have been the most dejected and pusillanimous in the day of temptation.

70. No man ought to think he hath found peace, when nothing troubles him; or that God loves him, because he hath no enemy; nor that all is well, because everything is according to his mind; nor that he is an holy person, because he prays



Rebecca at the well

Gen. XXI

with great sweetness and comfort. But he is at peace who is reconciled to God; and God loves him when he hath overcome himself; and all is well when nothing pleases him but God, being thankful in the midst of his afflictions; and he is holy, who, when he hath lost his comfort, loses nothing of his duty, but is still the same when God changes his face toward him.

POSTULANDA:

OR,

THINGS TO BE PRAYED FOR.

A FORM OF PRAYER BY WAY OF PARAPHRASE EXPOUNDING THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father

MERCIFUL and gracious; thou gavest us being, raising us from nothing to be an excellent creation, forming us after thine own image, tenderly feeding us, and conducting and strengthening us all our days. Thou art our Father by a more excellent mercy, adopting us in a new birth, to become partakers of the inheritance of Jesus. Thou hast given us the portion and the food of sons; O make us to do the duty of sons, that we may never lose our title to the glorious inheritance. Let this excellent name and title, by which thou hast vouchsafed to relate to us, be our glory and our confidence, our defence and guard, our ornament and strength, our dignity, and the endearment of obedience; the principle of an holy fear to thee, our Father, and of love to thee, and to our brethren, partakers of the same hope and dignity.

Unite every member of the church to thee in holy bands: let there be no more names of division, nor titles and ensigns of error and partiality: let not us who are brethren contend, but in giving honour to each other, and glory to thee; contending earnestly for the faith, but not to the breach of charity, nor the denying each other's hope. But grant that

we may all join in the promotion of the honour of thee, our Father; in celebrating the name, and spreading the family, and propagating the laws and institutions, the promises and dignities of our elder brother: that despising the transitory entertainments of this world, we may labour for, and long after the inheritance to which thou hast given us title, by adopting us into the dignity of sons. For ever let thy spirit witness to our spirit, that we are thy children. Enable us to cry "Abba Father."

Which art in heaven.

Heaven is thy throne, and earth is thy footstool. From thy throne thou beholdest all the dwellers on earth, and triest out the hearts of men, and nothing is hid from thy sight. And as thy knowledge is infinite, so is thy power uncircumscribed, as the utmost orb of heaven; and thou sittest in thy own essential happiness and tranquillity, immoveable and eternal. That is our country, and thither thy servants are travelling; there is our Father, and that is our inheritance; there our hearts are, for there our treasure is laid up till the day of recompence.

Hallowed be thy Name.

Thy name, O God, is glorious; and in thy name is our hope and confidence. "According to thy name, so is thy praise, unto the world's end. They that love thy name shall be joyful in thee;" for thy name which thou madest to be proclaimed unto thy people, is, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty." In this glorious name we worship thee, O Lord; "And all that know thy name will put their trust in thee. The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. Thou art worthy, O Lord, of honour and praise, and glory for ever and ever." We confess thy glories, we rejoice in thy mercies; "We hope in thy name, and thy saints like it well:" for thy name is praised unto the end of the world; it is believed by faith, relied upon by an holy hope, and loved by a great charity. All thy church celebrates thee with praises, and offers to thy name the sacrifices of prayers and thanksgiving.

Thou, O God, didst frame our nature by thy own image, and now thou hast imprinted thy name upon us; we are thy servants, the relatives and domestics of thy family: and thou hast honoured us with thy gracious appellative of Christians.

O let us never dishonour so excellent a title, nor by unworthy usages profane thy Holy name, but for ever glorify it! Let our life be answerable to our dignity: that our body may be chaste, our thoughts clean, our words gracious, our manners holy, and our life useful and innocent; "That men seeing our good works, may glorify thee, our Father, which art in heaven."

Thy kingdom come.

Thou reignest in heaven and earth; O do thou rule also in our hearts: advance the history of religion; let thy gospel be placed in all the regions of the earth, and let all nations come and worship thee, laying their proud wills at thy feet, submitting their understandings to the obedience of Jesus, conforming their affections to thy holy laws. Let thy kingdom be set up gloriously over us, and do thou reign in our spirits by thy Spirit of grace. Subdue every lust and inordinate appetite, trample upon our pride, mortify all rebellion within us, and let all thine and our enemies be brought into captivity, that, "sin never reign in our mortal bodies;" but that Christ may reign in our understanding by faith, in the will by charity, in the passions by mortification, in all the members by a right and chaste use of them. And when thy kingdom that is within us hath flourished, and is advanced to that height whither thou hast designed it, grant thy kingdom of glory may speedily succeed; and we thy servants be admitted to the peace and purity, the holiness and glories, of that state where thou reignest alone and art all in all.

Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.

Thy will, O God, is the measure of holiness and peace; thy Providence the great Disposer of all things, tying all events together, in order to thy glory, and the good of thy servants, by a wonderful mysterious chain of wisdom. Let thy will also be the measure of our desires; for we know that "whatsoever thou sayest is true, and whatsoever thou doest is good." Grant we may submit our wills to thine, being patient of evils which thou inflictest Lovers of the good which thou commandest, haters of all evil which thou forbiddest, pleased with all the accidents thou sendest; that though our nature is weaker than angels, yet our obedience may be as humble, our conformity to thy will may arise up to the degrees of unity, and theirs cannot be more; that as they in heaven, so we on earth, may obey thy will, promptly, cheerfully, zealously, and with all our faculties: and grant, that as they there, so all

the world here, may serve thee with peace and concord, purity, and love unfeigned; it has one heart, and one voice, glorifying thee, our heavenly Father.

Grant that we may quit all our own affections, and suspect our reasonings, and go out of ourselves and all our own confidences; that thou being to us all things, disposing all events, and guiding all our actions, and directing our intentions, and overruling all things in us, and about us, we may be servants of thy divine will for ever.

Give us this Day our daily Bread.

Thou, O God, which takest care of our souls, do not despise our bodies, which thou hast made and sanctified, and designed to be glorious. But now we are exposed to hunger and thirst, nakedness and weariness, want and inconvenience: "Give unto us neither poverty nor riches, but feed us with food convenient for us:" and clothe us with fitting provisions, according to that state and condition wherein thou hast placed thy servants; that we may not be tempted with want, nor made contemptible by beggary, nor wanton or proud by riches, nor in love with anything in this world; but that we may use it as strangers and pilgrims, as the relief of our needs, the support of our infirmities, and the oil of our lamps; feeding us till we are quite spent in thy service. Lord, take from thy servants sad carefulness, and all distrust; and give us only such a proportion of temporal things, as may enable us with comfort to do our duty.

Forgive us our Trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

O dear God, unless thou art pleased to pardon us, in vain it is that we should live here: and what good will our life do us? O look upon us with much mercy, for we have sinned grievously against thee. Pardon the adherent imperfections of our life, the weakness of our duty, the carelessnes of our spirit, our affected ignorance, our indilligence, our rashness and want of observation, our malice and presumptions. Turn thine eyes from our impurities; and behold the brightness and purest innocence of the holy Jesus; and under his cover we plead our cause; not that thou shouldest judge our sins, but give us pardon, and blot out all our iniquities, that we may never enter into the horrible regions, where there are torments without ceasing, a prison without a ransom, reproaches without comfort, anguish without patience, darkness without light, "a worm that never dies, and the fire that never goeth out."

But be pleased also to give us great charity, that we may truly forgive all that trouble or injure us; that by this character thou mayest discern us to be thy sons and servants, disciples of the holy Jesus; lest "our prayer be turned into sin," and thy grace be recalled, and thou enter into final anger against thy servants.

Lead us not into Temptation.

Gracious Father, we are weak and ignorant; our affections betray us, and make us willing to die; "our adversary, the devil, goeth up and down seeking whom he may devour;" he is busy and crafty, malicious and powerful, watchful and envious; and we tempt ourselves, running out to mischief, delighting in the approaches of sin, and love to have necessities put upon us, that sin may be unavoidable. Pity us in the midst of these disorders, and give us spiritual strength, holy resolutions, a watchful spirit, the whole armour of God, and thy protection, the guard of angels, and the conduct of thy holy Spirit to be our security in the day of danger. Give us thy grace to flee from all occasions to sin, that we may never tempt ourselves nor delight to be tempted; and let thy blessed providence so order the accidents of our lives, that we may not dwell near an enemy; and when thou shalt try us, and suffer us to enter into combat, let us always be on thy side, and fight valiantly, resist the devil, and endure patiently, and persevere constantly unto the end, that thou mayest crown thy own work in us.

But deliver us from Evil.

From sin and shame, from the malice and fraud of the devil, and from the falseness and greediness of men: from all thy wrath, and from all our impurities, good Lord, deliver thy servants.

Do not reserve anything of thy wrath in store for us; but let our sins be pardoned so fully, that thou mayest not punish our inventions. And yet if thou wilt not be intreated, but that it be necessary that we suffer, thy will be done. Smite us here with a father's rod, that thou mayest spare us hereafter: let the sad accidents of our life be for good to us, not for evil; for our amendment, not to exasperate or weary us, not to harden or confound us. And what evil soever it be that shall happen, let us not sin against thee: for ever deliver us from that evil; and for ever deliver us from the power of the evil one, the great enemy of mankind; and never let our portion be in that region of darkness, in that everlasting burning which thou hast prepared for the devil and his angels for ever.

For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

So shall we thy servants advance the mightiness of thy kingdom, the power of thy majesty, and the glory of thy mercy, from generation to generation, for ever. Amen.

LITANIES.

FOR ALL THINGS AND PERSONS.

O God, the Father of mercies, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon thy servants, and hear the prayers of us miserable sinners.

O blessed Jesus, the fountain of peace and pardon, our wisdom and our righteousness, our sanctification and redemption, have mercy upon thy servants; refuse not to hear the prayers of us miserable, sorrowful, and returning sinners.

O Holy and Divinest Spirit of the Father, help our infirmities: for ourselves we know not what to ask, nor how to pray; but do thou assist and be present in the desires of us miserable sinners.

I.

For Pardon of Sins.

Remember not, Lord, the follies of our childhood, nor the lusts of our youth; the wildness of our head, nor the wanderings of our heart; the infinite sins of our tongue, and the inexcusable errors of the days of vanity.

Lord, have mercy upon us, poor miserable sinners.

Remember not, O Lord, the growing iniquities of our elder age, the pride of our spirit, the abuse of our members, the greediness of our purposes, the peevishness and violence of all our passions and affections.

Lord, have mercy upon us, &c.

Remember not, O Lord, how we have been full of envy and malice, anger and revenge, fierce and earnest in the purchases and vanities of the world, and lazy and dull, slow and soon weary in the things of God, and of religion.

Lord, have mercy upon us, &c.

Remember not, O Lord, our uncharitable behaviour towards those with whom we have conversed; our jealousies and suspicions, our evil surmisings, and evil reportings; the breach of our promises to men, and the breach of all our holy vows made to thee our God.

Lord, have mercy upon us, &c.

Remember not, O Lord, how often we have omitted the several

parts and actions of our duty; for our sins of omission are infinite, and we have not sought after the righteousness of God, but have rested in carelessness and forgetfulness, in a false peace, and a silent conscience.

Lord, have mercy upon us, &c.

O most gracious Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servants, lest we be consumed in thy wrath and just displeasure; from which,

Good Lord, deliver us, and preserve thy servants for ever.

II.

For deliverance from evils.

From gross ignorance and stupid negligence; from a wandering head and a trifling spirit; from the violence and rule of passion; from a servile will and a commanding lust; from all intemperance, inordination, and irregularity whatsoever,

Good Lord, deliver and preserve thy servants for ever.

From a covetous mind, and greedy desires; from lustful thoughts and a wanton eye; from rebellious members, and the pride and vanity of spirit; from false opinions and ignorant confidences,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

From improvidence and prodigality; from envy and the spirit of slander; from idleness and sensuality; from presumption and despair; from sinful actions, and all vicious habits,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

From fierceness of rage, and hastiness of spirit; from clamours and reproachful language; from peevish anger and inhuman malice; from the spirit of contention, and hasty and indiscreet zeal,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

From a schismatical and heretical spirit; from tyranny and tumults; from sedition and factions; from envying the grace of God in our brother; from impenitency and hardness of heart; from obstinacy and apostacy; from delighting in sin, and hating God and good men,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

From fornication and adultery; from unnatural desires and unnatural hatreds; from gluttony and drunkenness; from loving and believing lies, and taking pleasure in the remembrances of evil things; from delighting in our neighbour's misery, and procuring it; from upbraiding others, and hating reproof ourselves,

Good Lord, deliver &c.

From impudence and shame;

from contempt and scorn, from oppression and cruelty; from a pitiless and unrelenting spirit; from a churlish behaviour, and indecent usages of ourselves or others,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

From famine and pestilence; from noisome and infectious diseases; from sharp and intolerable pains; from impatience and tediousness of spirit; from a taste of temptation and hardened consciences,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

From a banishment and prison; from widowhood and want; from violence of pains and passions; from tempests and earthquakes; from the rage of fire and water; from rebellion and treason; from fretfulness and inordinate cares; from murmuring against God, and disobedience to the divine commandments,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

From delaying our repentance and persevering in sin; from false principles and prejudices; from unthankfulness and irreligion; from seducing others, and being abused ourselves; from the malice and craftiness of the devil, and the deceit and lyings of the world,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

From wounds and murder, from precipices and falls; from fractures of bones, and dislocation of joints; from dismembering our bodies, and all infatuation of our souls; from folly and madness; from uncertainty of mind and state, and from a certainty of sinning,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

From thunder and lightning; from phantasms, spectres, and illusions of the night; from sudden and great changes; from the snares of wealth, and the contempt of beggary and extreme poverty: from being made an example and a warning to others, by suffering sad judgments ourselves,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

From condemning others, and justifying ourselves; from misspending our time, and abusing thy grace; from calling good evil, and evil good; from consenting to folly, and tempting others,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

From excess in speaking, and peevish silence; from looser laughing, and immoderate weeping; from giving evil example to others, or following any ourselves; from giving or receiving scandal; from the horrible sentence of endless death and damnation,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

From cursing and swearing; from uncharitable chiding and easiness to believe evil; from the evil spirit that walketh at noon, and the arrow that flieth in darkness; from the angel of wrath, and perishing in popular diseases,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

From the want of a spiritual guide; from a famine of the word and sacraments; from hurtful persecution, and from taking part with persecutors,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

From drowning, or being burnt alive; from sleepless nights, and contentious days; from a melancholic and a confused spirit; from violent fears, and the loss of reason; from a vicious life, and a sudden and unprovided death,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

From relying upon vain fancies and false foundations; from an evil and an amazed conscience; from sinning near the end of our life, and despairing in the day of death,

Good Lord, deliver, &c

From hypocrisy and wilfulness; from self-love and vain ambition; from curiosity and carelessness; from being tempted in the days of our weakness; from the prevailing of the flesh, and grieving the spirit; from all thy wrath, and from all our sins,

Good Lord, deliver, &c.

III.

For Gifts and Graces.

Hear our prayer, O Lord, and consider our desire: hearken unto us, for thy truth and righteousness' sake. O hide not thy face from us, neither cast away thy servants in displeasure.

Give unto us the spirit of prayer, frequent and fervent, holy and persevering; and unreproveable faith, a just and an humble hope, and a never-failing charity.

Hear our prayers, O Lord, and consider our desire.

Give unto us true humility, a meek and a quiet spirit, a loving and a friendly, an holy and an useful conversation; bearing the burthens of our neighbours, denying ourselves, and studying to benefit others, and to please thee in all things.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Give us a prudent and a sober, a just and a sincere, a temperate and a religious spirit; a great contempt of the world, a love of holy things, and a longing after heaven, and the instruments and paths that lead thither,

Hear our prayers, &c.

Grant us to be thankful to our benefactors, righteous in performing promises, loving to our relatives, careful of our charges; to be gentle, and easy to be entreated; slow to anger, and fully instructed and readily prepared for every good work.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Give us a peaceable spirit, and a peaceable life, free from debt and deadly sin; grace to abstain from appearances of evil, and to do nothing but what is of good report: to confess Christ and his holy religion, by an holy and obedient life, and a mind ready to die for him when he shall call us and assist us.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Give to thy servants a watchful and an observing spirit, diligent in doing our duty, inflexible to evil, obedient to thy word, inquisitive after thy will, pure and holy thoughts, strong and religious purposes, and thy grace to perform faithfully what we have promised in the day of our duty, or in the day of our calamity.

Hear our prayers, &c.

O teach us to despise all vanity, to fight the battles of the Lord manfully against the flesh, the world, and the devil; to spend our time religiously and usefully, to speak gracious words, to walk always as in thy presence, to preserve our souls and bodies in holiness, fit for the habitation of the Holy Spirit of God.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Give us an holy and perfect repentance, a well-instructed understanding, regular affections, a constant, a wise heart, and a good name, a fear of thy majesty, and a love of all thy glories, above all the things in the world, for ever.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Give us an healthful body, and a clear understanding; the love of our neighbours, and the peace of the church; the public use and comforts of thy holy word and sacraments, a great love to all Christians, and obedience to our superiors, ecclesiastical and civil, all the days of our life.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Give us spiritual wisdom, that we may discern what is pleasing to thee, and follow what belongs unto our peace; and let the knowledge and love of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord, be our guide and our portion all our days.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Give unto us holy dispositions, and an active industry in thy service, to redeem the time misspent in vanity: for thy pity's sake take not vengeance of us for our sins; but sanctify our souls and bodies in this life, and glorify them hereafter.

Hear our prayers, &c.

Our Father, &c.

IV.

TO BE ADDED TO THE FORMER LITANIES, ACCORDING AS OUR DEVOTIONS AND TIME WILL SUFFER.

For all States of Men and Women, especially in the Christian church.

O blessed God, in mercy remember thine inheritance, and forget not the congregation of the poor, for ever: pity poor mankind, whose portion is misery and folly, shame and death. But thou art our Redeemer, and the lifter up of our head; and under the shadow of thy wings shall be our help, until this tyranny be overpast.

Have mercy upon us, O God, and hide not thyself from our petition.

Preserve, O God, the Catholic church in holiness and truth, in unity and peace; free from persecution, or glorious under it; that she may for ever advance the honour of our Lord Jesus, for ever represent his sacrifice, and glorify his person, and advance his religion, and be accepted of thee in her blessed Lord; that being filled with his Spirit, she may partake of his glory.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Give the spirit of government and holiness to all Christian kings, princes, and governors: grant that their people may obey them, and they may obey thee, and live in honesty and peace, justice and holy religion; being nursing fathers to the church, advocates for the oppressed, patrons for the widows, and a sanctuary for the miserable and the fatherless; that they may reign with thee for ever in glory in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Give to thy servants the bishops, and all the clergy, the spirit of holiness and courage, of patience and humility, of prudence and diligence, to preach and declare thy will by an holy life and wise discourses; that they may minister to the good of souls, and find a glorious reward in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Give to our relatives (our wives and children, our friends and benefactors, our charges, our family, &c.) pardon and support, comfort in all their sorrows, strength in all temptations, the guard of angels to preserve them from evil, and the conduct of thy holy Spirit to lead them into all good; that they doing their duty, may feel thy mercies and partake of thy glories hereafter.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Give to all Christians, kingdoms and commonwealths, peace and plenty, health and holy religion; to all families of religion, and nurseries of piety, zeal and holiness, prudence and unity, peace and contentedness; to all schools of learning, quietness and industry, freedom from wars and violence, factions and envy.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Give to all married persons faith and love, charitable and wise compliances, sweetness of society, and innocence of conversation; to all virgins and widows, a great love of religion, a sober and a contented spirit, an unwearied attendance to devotion and the offices of holiness; protection to the fatherless; comfort to the disconsolate; patience and submission, health and spiritual advantages to the sick, that they may feel thy comforts for the days wherein they have suffered adversity.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Be thou a star and a guide to them that travel by land or sea; the confidence and comfort of them that are in storms and shipwrecks; the strength of them that toil in the mines, and row in the gallies; an instructor to the ignorant; to them that are condemned to die, be thou a guide unto death; give cheerfulness to every sad heart, spiritual strength and proportionable comfort to them that are afflicted by evil spirits; pity the lunatics; give life and salvation to all to whom thou hast given no understanding; accept the stupid and the fools to mercy; give liberty to prisoners, redemption to captives, maintenance to the poor, patronage and defence to the oppressed; and put a period to the iniquity and to the miseries of all mankind.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Give unto our enemies grace and pardon, charity to us, and love to thee; take away all anger from them, and all mistakes from us, all misinterpretations and jealousies; bring all sinners to repentance and holiness, and to all thy saints and servants give an increasing love and a persevering duty; bring all Turks, Jews, and infidels to the knowledge and confession of the Lord Jesus and a partici-

pation of all the promises of the gospel, all the benefits of his passion; to all heretics give humility and ingenuity, repentance of their errors, and grace and power to make amends to the church and truth, and a public acknowledgment of an holy faith, to the glory of the Lord Jesus.

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Give to all merchants faithfulness and truth, to the labouring husbandman health, and fair seasons of the year; and reward his toil with the dew of heaven, and the blessings of the earth: to all artisans give diligence in their callings, and a blessing on their labours, and on their families; to old men, piety and perfect repentance, a liberal heart, and an open hand, great religion, and desires after heaven. To young men give sobriety and chastity, health and usefulness, and early piety, and a persevering duty; to all families visited with the rod of God give consolation, and an holy use of the affliction, and a speedy deliverance: to us all pardon and holiness and life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.—Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communication of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and for ever.—Amen.

A short Prayer to be said every Morning.

I.

O Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of mercy and comfort; with reverence and fear, with humble confidence and strong desires, I approach to the throne of grace, begging of thee mercy and protection, pardon and salvation. O my God, I am a sinner, but sorrowful and repenting: thou art justly offended at me, but yet thou art my Lord and my Father, merciful and gracious. Be pleased to blot all my sins out of thy remembrance, and heal my soul, that I may never any more sin against thee. Lord, open my eyes, that I may see my own infirmities, and watch against them; and my own follies, that I may amend them; and be pleased to give me perfect understanding in the way of godliness, that I may walk in it all the days of my pilgrimage. Give me a spirit diligent in the works of my calling, cheerful and zealous in religion, fervent and frequent in my prayers, charitable and useful in my conversation. Give me an healthful and a chaste body, a pure and an holy soul, a sanctified and an humble spirit; and let my body, and soul, and spirit be preserved unblameable, to the coming of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

II.

Blessed be thy name, O God, and blessed be thy mercies, who hast preserved me this night from sin and sorrow; from sad chances, and a violent death, from the malice of the devil; and the evil effects of my own corrupted nature and infirmity. The outgoings of the morning and the evening shall praise thee; and thy servants shall rejoice in giving thee praise for the operation of thy hands. Let thy providence and care watch over me this day, and all my whole life; that I may never sin against thee by idleness or folly, by evil company or private sins, by word or deed, by thought or desire. And let the employment of the day leave no sorrow, or the remembrance of an evil conscience at night; but let it be holy and profitable, blessed and always innocent: that when the days of my short abode are done, and the shadow is departed, I may die in thy fear and favour, and rest in an holy hope, and at last return to the joys of a blessed resurrection, through Jesus Christ. In whose name, and in whose words, in behalf of myself, and all my friends, and all thy servants, I humbly and heartily pray,

Our Father, &c.

A prayer for the Evening.

Eternal God, Almighty Father of men and angels, by whose care and providence I am preserved and blessed, comforted and assisted, I humbly beg of thee to pardon the sins and follies of this day, the weakness of my services, and the strength of my passions; the rashness of my words, and the vanity and evil of my actions. O just and dear God! how long shall I confess my sins, and pray against them, and yet fall under them? O! let it be so no more; let me never return to the follies of which I am ashamed, which bring sorrow and death, and thy displeasure, worse than death. Give me command over all my evil inclinations, and a perfect hatred of sin, and a love to thee, above all the desires of this world. Be pleased to bless and preserve me this night from all sin, and all violence of chance, and the malice of the spirits of darkness: watch over me in my sleep: and whether I sleep or wake, let me be thy servant. Be thou first and last in all my thoughts, and the guide and continual assistance of all my actions. Preserve my body, pardon the sin of my soul, and sanctify my spirit. Let me always live holily, and justly, and soberly: and when I die, receive my soul into thy

hands, O holy and ever-blessed Jesus; that I may lie in thy bosom, and long for thy coming, and hear thy blessed sentence at doomsday, and behold thy face, and live in thy kingdom, singing praises to God for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father, &c

SUNDAY.

A Prayer against Pride.

I.

O eternal God, merciful and glorious; thou art exalted far above all heavens; thy throne, O God, is glory, and thy sceptre is righteousness; thy will is holiness, and thy wisdom the great foundation of empire and government. I adore thy majesty, and rejoice in thy mercy, and revere thy power, and confess all glory, and dignity, and honour to be thine alone, and theirs to whom thou shalt impart any ray of thy majesty or reflection of thy honour: but as for me, I am a worm, and no man; vile dust and ashes, the son of corruption, and the heir of rottenness; seized upon by folly, a lump of ignorance, and sin, and shame, and death. What art thou, O Lord? the great God of heaven and earth, the fountain of holiness, and perfection infinite. But what am I? So ignorant, that I know not what; so poor, that I have nothing of my own; so miserable, that I am the heir of sorrow and death; and so sinful, that I am encompassed with shame and grief.

II.

And yet, O my God, I am proud; proud of my shame, glorifying in my sin, boasting of my infirmities; for this is all that I have of my own, save only that I have multiplied my miseries by vile actions, every day dishonouring the work of thy hands: my understanding is too confident, my affections rebellious, my will refractory and disobedient; and yet I know thou resistest the proud; and didst cast the morning-stars, the angels, from heaven, into chains and darkness, when they grew giddy and proud, walking upon the battlements of heaven, beholding the glorious regions that were above them.

III.

Thou, O God, who givest grace to the humble, do something also for the proud man; make me humble and obedient. Take from me the spirit of pride and haughtiness, ambition and self-flattery, confidence and gaiety. Teach me to think well, and to expound all things fairly of my brother; to love

his worthiness, to delight in his praises, to excuse his errors, to give thee thanks for his graces, to rejoice in all the good that he receives, and ever to believe and speak better things of him than of myself.

IV.

O teach me to love to be concealed, and little esteemed; let me be truly humbled, and heartily ashamed of my sin and folly: teach me to bear reproaches evenly, for I have deserved them; to refuse all honours done unto me because I have not deserved them; to return all to thee, for it is thine alone; to suffer reproof thankfully; to amend all my faults speedily: and do thou invest my soul with the humble robe of my meek Master and Saviour Jesus; and when I have humbly, patiently, charitably, and diligently served thee, change this robe into the shining garment of immortality, my confusion into glory, my folly to perfect knowledge, my weakness and dishonours to the strength and beauties of the sons of God.

V.

In the meantime, use what means thou pleasest to conform me to the image of thy holy Son; that I may be gentle to others and severe to myself; that I may sit down in the lowest place, striving to go before my brother in nothing but in doing him honour, and staying for my glory till thou shalt please in the day of recompenses to reflect light from thy face, and admit me to behold thy glories. Grant this for Jesus Christ's sake, who humbled himself to the death and shame of the cross, and is now exalted unto glory. Unto him, with thee, O Father, be glory and praise for ever and ever. Amen.

MONDAY.

A Prayer against covetousness.

I.

O Almighty God, eternal treasure of all good things; thou fillest all things with plenteousness: thou "clothest the lilies of the field, and feedest the young ravens that call upon thee:" thou art all-sufficient in thyself, and all sufficient to us. Let thy providence be my storehouse, thy dispensation of temporal things the limit of my labour, my own necessity the measures of my desire, but never let my desires of this world be greedy, nor my labour immoderate, nor my care vexatious and distracting; but prudent, moderate, holy, subordinate to thy will, the measure thou hast appointed for me.

II.

Teach me, O God, to despise the world; to labour for the true riches; to seek the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness; to be content with what thou providest; to be in this world like a stranger, with affections set upon heaven, labouring for, and longing after the possessions of thy kingdom: but never suffer my affections to dwell below: but give me a heart compassionate to the poor, liberal to the needy, open and free in all my communications, without base ends or greedy designs, or unworthy arts of gain: but let my strife be to gain thy favour, to obtain the blessedness of doing good to others, and giving to them that want, and the blessedness of receiving from thee pardon and support, grace and holiness, perseverance and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

TUESDAY.

A *Prayer against Lust.*

I.

O eternal purity! Thou art brighter than the sun, purer than the angels, and the heavens are not clean in thy sight; with mercy behold thy servant, apt to be tempted with every object, and to be overcome by every enemy. I cannot, O God, stand in the day of battle and danger, unless thou coverest me with thy shield, and hidest me under thy wings. The fiery darts of the devil are ready to consume me, unless the dew of thy grace for ever descend upon me. Thou didst make me after thine image; be pleased to preserve me so pure and spotless, chaste and clean, that my body may be an holy temple, and my soul a sanctuary to entertain thy divinest Spirit, the spirit of love and holiness, the prince of purities.

II.

Reprove in me the spirit of fornication and uncleanness, and fill my soul with holy fires, that no strange fire may come into the temple of my body, where thou hast chosen to dwell. O cast out all those unclean spirits which have unhallowed the place where thy holy feet have trod. Pardon all my hurtful thoughts—all my impurities; that I who am a member of Christ may not become the member of an harlot, nor the slave of the devil, nor a servant of lust and unworthy desires; but do thou purify my love, and let me seek the things which are above, hating the garments spotted with the flesh, never any more grieving the Holy Spirit by filthy inclinations, with impure and fantastic thoughts: but let my thoughts be holy, my soul pure, my body chaste and

healthful, my spirit severe, devout, and religious every day more and more; that at the day of our appearing I may be presented to God washed and cleansed, pure and spotless, by the blood of the holy Lamb, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WEDNESDAY.

A Prayer against gluttony and drunkenness.

I.

O Almighty Father of men and angels, who hast of thy great bounty provided plentifully for all mankind, to support his state, to relieve his necessities, to refresh his sorrows, to recreate his labours, that he may praise thee, and rejoice in thy mercies and bounty; be thou gracious unto thy servant yet more, and suffer me not by my folly to change thy bounty into sin, thy grace into wantonness. Give me the spirit of temperance and sobriety, that I may use thy creatures in the same measures, and to the same purposes which thou hast designed, so as may best enable me to serve thee; but not to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Let me not, as Esau, prefer meat before a blessing; but subdue my appetite, subjecting it to reason and the grace of God; being content with what is moderate and useful, and easy to be obtained; taking it in due time, receiving it thankfully, making it to minister to my body; that my body may be a good instrument of the soul, and the soul a servant of thy Divine majesty for ever and ever.

II.

Pardon, O God, in whatsoever I have offended thee by meat and drink, and pleasures: and never let my body any more be oppressed with loads of sloth and delicacies, or my soul drowned in seas of wine or strong drink; but let my appetites be changed into spiritual desires, that I may hunger after the food of angels, and thirst for the wine of elect souls, and may account it meat and drink, and pleasures, to do thy will, O God. Lord, let me eat and drink so that my food may not become a temptation, or a sin, or a disease; but grant that with so much caution and prudence I may watch over my appetite, that I may in the strength of thy mercies and refreshments, in the light of thy countenance, and in the paths of thy commandments, walk before thee all the days of my life, acceptable to thee in Jesus Christ, ever advancing his honour, and being filled with his Spirit; that I may at last partake of his glory, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THURSDAY.

A Prayer against Envy.

I.

O most gracious Father, thou Spring of an eternal charity, who hast so loved mankind, that thou didst open thy bosom, and send thy holy Son to convey thy mercies to us; and thou didst create angels and men, that thou mightest have objects to whom thou mightest communicate thy goodness; give me grace to follow so glorious a precedent, that I may never envy the prosperity of any one, but rejoice to honour him whom thou honourest, to love him whom thou lovest, to commend the virtuous, to discern the precious from the vile, giving honour to whom honour belongs; that I may go to heaven in the noblest way of rejoicing, in the good of others.

II.

O dear God, never suffer the devil to rub his vilest leprosy of envy upon me; never let me have the affections of the desperate and damned: let it not be ill with me when it is well with others; but let thy Holy Spirit so overrule me for ever that I may pity the afflicted and be compassionate, and have a fellow-feeling of my brother's sorrows, and that I may, as much as I can, promote his good, and give thee thanks for it, and rejoice with them that do rejoice; never censuring his actions cursedly, nor detracting from his praises spitefully, nor upbraiding his infelicities maliciously, but pleased in all things which thou doest or givest: that I may then triumph in spirit, when thy kingdom is advanced, when thy Spirit rules, when thy church is profited, when thy saints rejoice, when the devil's interest is destroyed; truly loving thee, and truly loving my brother; that we may all together join in the holy communion of saints both here and hereafter, in the measures of grace and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FRIDAY.

A Prayer against Wrath and inordinate Anger.

I.

O Almighty Judge of men and angels, whose anger is always the minister of justice; slow, but severe, lightly arising, but falling heavily when it comes; give to thy servant a meek and a gentle spirit, that I also may be slow to anger and easy to mercy and forgiveness. Give me a wise and a constant heart, that I may not be moved with every trifling mistake, and inconsiderable

accident, in the conversation and intercourse of others; never be moved to an intemperate anger for any injury that is done or offered: let my anger ever be upon a just cause, measured with moderation and reason, expressed with charity and prudence, lasting but till it hath done some good, either upon myself or others.

II.

Lord, let me be ever courteous, and easy to be entreated; never let me fall into a peevish or contentious spirit, but follow peace with all men; offering forgiveness, inviting them by courtesies; ready to confess my own errors, apt to make amends, and desirous to be reconciled. Let no sickness or cross accident, no employment or weariness, make me angry, or ungentle and discontented, or unthankful, or uneasy to them that minister to me; but in all things make me like unto the holy Jesus. Give me the spirit of a Christian, charitable, humble, merciful and meek, useful and liberal; complying with every chance: angry at nothing but my own sins, and grieving for the sins of others; that while my passion obeys my reason, and my reason is religious, and my religion is pure and undefiled, managed with humility, and adorned with charity, I may escape thy anger, which I have deserved, and may dwell in thy love, and be thy son and servant for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

SATURDAY

I.

A Prayer against Weariness in Well-doing.

O my God, merciful and gracious; my soul groans under the loads of its own infirmity; when my spirit is willing, my flesh is weak, my understanding foolish and imperfect, my will peevish and listless, my affections wandering after strange objects, my fancy wild and unfixed; all my senses minister to folly and vanity; and though they were all made for religion, yet they least of all delight in that. O my God, pity me, and hear me when I pray, and make me that I may pray acceptably. Give me a love of religion, an unwearied spirit in the things of God. Let me not relish or delight in the things of the world, in sensual objects and transitory possessions: but make my eyes look up to thee, my soul filled with thee, my spirit ravished with thy love, my understanding employed in the meditation of thy law, all my powers and faculties of soul and body wholly serving thee, and delighting in such holy ministeries.

II.

O most glorious God: what greater favour is there than that I may, and what easier employment can there be than to pray to thee, to be admitted to thy presence, and to represent our needs, and that we have our needs supplied only for asking and desiring passionately and humbly? But we rather quit our hopes of heaven, than buy it at the cheapest rate of humble prayer. This, O God, is the greatest infirmity and infelicity of man, and hath an intolerable cause, and is an insufferable evil.

III.

O relieve my spirit with thy graciousnesss; take from me all tediousness of spirit, and give me a labouriousness that will not be tired, an hope that shall never fail, a desire of holiness not to be satisfied till it possesses a charity that will always increase; that I, making religion the business of my whole life, may turn all things into religion; doing all to thy glory, and by the measures of thy word, and of thy Spirit; that when thou shalt call me from this deliciousness of employment, and the holy mysteries of grace, I may pass into the employments of saints and angels; whose work it is, with eternal joy and thanksgiving, to sing praises to the mercies of the Great Redeemer of men, and Saviour of men and angels, Jesus Christ our Lord: to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and worship, all service and thanks, all glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

A Prayer to be said by a Maiden, before she enter into the state of Marriage.

I.

O most gracious God, and my most indulgent Lord, and gracious Father; who dost bless us by thy bounty, pardon us by thy mercy, support and guide us by thy grace, and govern us sweetly by thy providence: I give thee most humble and hearty thanks, that thou hast hitherto preserved me in my virgin state with innocence and chastity, in a good name and modest report. It is thy goodness alone, and the blessed emanation of thy Holy Spirit by which I have been preserved; and to thee I return all praise and thanks, and adore and love thy goodness infinite.

II.

And now, O Lord, since by thy dispensation and overruling providence, I am to change my condition and enter into the holy state of marriage, which thou hast sanctified by thy institution, and blessed by thy word and promises, and raised

up to an excellent mystery, that it might represent the union of Christ and his church: be pleased to go along with thy servant in my entering into and passing through this state; that it may not be a state of temptation or sorrow, by occasion of my sins or infirmities, but of holiness and comfort, as thou hast intended it to all that love and fear thy holy name:

III.

Lord, bless and preserve that dear person whom thou hast chosen to be my husband: let his life be long and blessed, comfortable and holy; and let me also become a great blessing and comfort unto him, a sharer in all his joys, a refreshment in all his sorrows, a meet helper for him in all accidents and chances of the world. Make me amiable for ever in his eyes, and very dear to him. Unite his heart to me in the dearest union of love and holiness; and mine to him in all sweetness, and charity and compliance. Keep from me all morosity and ungentleness, all sullenness and harshness of disposition, all pride and vanity, all discontentedness and unreasonableness of passion and humour; and make me humble and obedient, charitable and loving, patient and contented, useful and observant; that we may delight in each other, according to thy blessed word and ordinance, and both of us may rejoice in thee, having our portion in the love and service of God for ever and ever.

IV.

O blessed Father, never suffer any mistakes or discontent, any distrustfulness or sorrow, any trifling arrests of fancy, or unhandsome accident, to cause any unkindness between us; but let us so dearly love, so affectionately observe, so religiously attend to each other's good and content, that we may always please thee, and by this learn and practise our duty and greatest love to thee, and become mutual helps to each other in the way of Godliness; that when we have received the blessings of a married life, the comforts of society, the endearments of an holy and great affection, and the dowry of blessed children, we may for ever dwell together in the embraces of thy love and glories, feasting in the marriage-supper of the Lamb to eternal ages, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for a holy and a happy Death.

O eternal and holy Jesus, who by death hast overcome death, and by thy passion hast taken out its sting, and made it to become one of the gates of heaven, and an entrance to felicity; have mercy upon me

now, and at the hour of my death: let thy grace accompany me all the days of my life, that I may by an holy conversation and an habitual performance of my duty, wait for the coming of our Lord, and be ready to enter with thee at whatever hour thou shalt come. Lord, let not my death be in any sense unprovided, nor untimely, nor hasty, but after the manner of men; having in it nothing extraordinary, but an extraordinary piety, and the manifestation of a great and miraculous mercy. Let my sense and my understanding be preserved entire till the last of my days; and grant that I may die the death of the righteous, free from debt and deadly sin; having first discharged all my obligations of justice, leaving none miserable and unprovided in my departure; but be thou the portion of all my friends and relatives, and let thy blessing descend upon their heads and abide there till they shall meet in the bosom of our Lord. Preserve me ever in the communion and peace of the church; and bless my death-bed with the opportunity of an holy and a spiritual guide, with the assistance and guard of angels, with the reception of the holy sacrament, with patience and dereliction of my own desires, with a strong faith, and a firm and humble hope, with just measures of repentance, and great treasures of charity to thee, my God, and to all the world; that my soul, in the arms of the holy Jesus, may be deposited with safety and joy, there to expect the revelation of thy day, and then to partake of the glories of thy kingdom, O eternal and holy Jesus. Amen.

MEDITATIONS

UPON THE

LORD'S PRAYER.

BY SIR MATTHEW HALE.

MATTHEW VI, IX.

After this manner therefore pray ye. Our Father, &c.

BY the sin of Adam, and the corruption and obliquity that thereupon entered into the human nature, mankind had contracted a three-fold mischief, 1. Guilt that needed an expiation; 2. Blindness, that needed an illumination; 3. Perverseness and rebellion, that needed power and victory to subdue it. In the fulness of time God sent his Son into the world with healing for all these diseases:

1. He sent his Son to be our sacrifice and our priest: and not only so in his own person, but by derivation unto those that believe on him, he hath imprinted upon them and communicated unto them a participation of his own office, and hath made them kings and priests: 1. By making an atonement for them with his Father, whereby they are accepted; John 16. 26, 27. "I say not unto you I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you:" not to exclude the continuance and efficacy of his intercession, but to intimate the fulness of our reconciliation, that having made us of his household, *Ephes.* 2. 18. we may have access to the master and father of the family: *Ephes.* 2. 18. "For through him we have access unto the Father." 2. By sending his own spirit to instruct, and warm, and fit our spirits to come into the presence; "For through him we have access by one Spirit," *Ephes.* 2. 18. teaching what to ask, and enabling us to ask as we should, *Rom.* 8. 26. "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought."

2. As he made him a sacrifice for



our guilt, so he sent him "to be a light for our darkness," *John* 1. 5. the world was all in darkness and error; the most exact sublimate wits inscribed their altar, "To the unknown God." They were ignorant of things to be known, and of things to be done. The Son of God that came out of the bosom of his Father, and knew all his mind, received a commission from him to instruct mankind in the way to life. *Job* 17. 8. "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." *John* 3, 34. "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." *Matt.* 11. 27. "No man knoweth the will of the Father save the Son, and him to whom the Son revealeth it."

3. As he came with light to instruct us, so he came with power to conquer in us; "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power:" and to conquer for us death and hell.

The business that we are to consider respecteth principally the first and second part of his meditation, viz. in bringing the will and mind of God to us, to teach us what to ask, which concerns his prophetical office: and again, having formed desires in us according to that will of God, to present them unto his Father, which concerns his priestly office.

After this manner pray: *Luke* 2. 1, 2. "One of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, and he said, When ye pray, say," &c. In general we may learn;

1. That Christ doth not exclude other prayers; the injunction of this excludes not all other prayers. Our Saviour himself, and those that were acquainted with his mind and practice used variety of prayers, according to the several occasions, differing from this form, and therefore the apostle commands, *Ephes.* 6. 18. "Praying always with all prayers and supplications." Prayers formed for every occasion. And that spirit that maketh intercession for us with groans that cannot be uttered, is not confined to any particular form, not to vary from it.

2. Though thou art not restrained to this form only, yet in all thy prayers pray after this manner. There is somewhat in this prayer that must be ingredient to all thy prayers.

1. Be sure thou hast a commission, a promise, for what thou prayest; desire those things that are warrantable by the will of God revealed in his word. Christ was acquainted with the mind of God, and gives us a pattern to ask those things which are warrantable. "Ask for thy good, but ask not for thy lust,"—*James* 4. 2.

2. Though the things thou askest be warrantable and agreeable to the revealed will of God, yet in the particularity of thy desires refer thyself and submit unto the will of God: because thou art not wise enough to know what is fit for thee in particular, especially in the measure, time, and manner of the thing thou askest. The Son of God hath taught us to pray for the fulfilling of the will of God before the supply of our own wants; and in his own prayer in the garden,—*Matth.* 26, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Whatsoever thou desirest, yet confine not God. Thou shalt be sure thy prayer shall not lose his fruit, though the thing desired seem not to be granted. The cup did not pass from our Saviour, though he asked it,—*Matth.* 26. 39. "Yet he was heard in that he feared,"—*Heb.* 5. 7.

3. As much as thou canst let thy prayer be a reasonable service, a work of thy spirit and understanding, 1 *Cor.* 14. 15. not only of thy lips and tongue: for thou hast to do with the God of the spirits of all flesh, that will be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Pray with thy lips, that thou mayest by that means fix thy mind the better to the work; but let thy words be the production of thy soul. Let thy heart pray as well as thy tongue. And this was one of the reasons of our Saviour's inditing this prayer in this short and pithy form, to condemn the vanity of the Gentiles, who had confidence in their vain repetitions of words, without the intention and application of the heart,—*Matth.* 6. 8.

4. Here we see Christ, the wisdom of the Father, delivers out a form of prayer, framed with a great deal of wisdom, containing very much matter in a few words learn that, though thou art not to put confidence in studied devotions, nor to make thy prayers the work of thy invention or wit, but of thy heart and soul, yet let the reverence and awe thou bearest to him, before whom thou comest in thy prayers, the seriousness of the business about which thou goest, put thee in mind to prepare thyself and thy soul, and to turn it by these considerations to an humble frame of spirit; to a fore-casting of thy desires; to an humble approach to the presence of God; to all beseeming reverence both in thy words and gesture. The heart, it is true, should be in a continual frame of prayer, and almost every occurrence of our life requires a lifting up of the heart to God in prayer, or in thanksgiving; which cannot be so ordered with preparation; but solemn prayer, though in private, requires a just preparation of the heart, and a per-

formance of it with the whole contribution of the whole soul, and strength, and understanding, and affection.

3. Though thou art not bound to use no other form, yet use this frequently, upon these considerations:

1. It is the command of thy Lord and Master. There is somewhat of command in these words. He that commands to pray, after this manner, meant not that this prayer should be forgotten. That which was made a pattern to thy other prayers was not intended to be a thing only to be looked upon, and not to be used. Thou mayest use other prayers to give scope to thy Spirit, but conclude with this.

It is a great means of strengthening the heart in prayer. When I shall consider I am now using that very prayer which the Son of God, when he was in the flesh, at the request of his disciples, gave unto them, not only as a rule and pattern, but as a frame, "When ye pray, say, &c." I call the great God my Father, and it is no presumption in me so to do; the eternal Son of God, that knew all his Father's mind, commanded me to call him so, and to come before him as my Father. I am begging for the conveniencies of my life, for pardon of my sins, for my preservation in and from temptation. Had they not been things that I might hope to be granted, the Son of God would never have taught me to ask them. "O Lord, it is true, I can see nothing in myself why I should expect that thou shouldest hear me; my sins are renewed every day, and I begged pardon but yesterday, and I have sinned against thee the same sin this day: but yet thy son, that knows all thy will, that would never have put me to beg that which were unfit for me to ask, or thee to grant, he it is that taught me to beg my daily bread of thee, and as often in the same prayer to beg thy forgiveness: I will not learn hereby to presume in offending, but yet I will learn to be confident in thy mercy.

3. It is a comprehensive prayer, and therefore fit to be supplemental unto thine own prayers. Thy present wants or fears or desires carry thy Spirit in thy own prayers eagerly and vehemently in pursuit of those thy wants, fears or desires; because they are things presently incumbent upon thee, and in thy view; and by that means thou dost many times in thy prayers overshoot many matters, that are of more concernment, it may be, for thee to ask; as the glory of God, thy preservation from future inconveniencies, that are not yet in thy view; and this prayer gathers up thy omissions, calls home thy Spirit

unto that frame and temper of heart that is fit; viz. Submission to the will and glory of God in the first petition of this prayer, furnisheth in a short compendium to pray over that which thou hast before asked, and to pray for that which before thou hast omitted.

4. As it is a very comprehensive prayer, and contains much, so it is a compendious prayer, and contains much in little. The wise and merciful God knows the frailty of our nature, and therefore hath fitted us according to our narrowness with abridgement; he knows the shortness of our memory, and therefore he gave his will under the old law in ten words. Christ he gave us another abridgment: "Love God and thy neighbour." God also knows the weakness of our Spirits, and therefore he gives us a short prayer, that in the using of it our spirits may bear up, and the fire last till the prayer ended. It is true, when we have a continuing sense of evil felt or feared upon us, our spirits are able to hold out a prayer long in warmth and heat: but when the matters of our desires are not so apparent to our sense our spirits are apt to grow cold before we come at the end of it. Here is a short prayer, furnished in all things fit to be asked, and such as thy spirit may go along with to the end without being tired. It is true, that a man shall usually find more intention of spirit in his own prayers, than in this. Bless God that thou hast this intention of spirit in thy own prayers, and neglect them not, but pray for pardon that thou wantest it in this, and strive to amend it.

Now the great cause of the unprofitable use even of this prayer, and divers other ordinances, grows from this, that people use them without a distinct and deep consideration of the things contained in them. The sun in the firmament is the greatest wonder in the world, and of infinitely more consideration than the appearance of a new star or comet; but the commonness of sun makes man pass over that without any observation, and yet look upon the latter with admiration and astonishment. Just thus it is with this and other prayers: this prayer, being taken up and learnt with our speech, we swallow by wholesale, and never weigh it, or consider it; but other prayers of our own and others, whilst they are new to us, we use more attentively, and it may be more profitably. It should therefore be our care to rub out the corn out of this ear; to examine and consider this excellent prayer distinctly, that so in the use of it a full understanding and affection may go along with it; without which it is no

prayer; for in prayer we have to do with the God of the spirits of all flesh, that judgeth not, neither regardeth, the bare repetition of words, the thing condemned by our Saviour when he commanded this prayer. But by the uniting our souls and spirits to him, our words are not so much our prayers as the consequents and signs our prayers.

The known division of this prayer, is first, the Preamble, secondly, the Request, thirdly, the Conclusion.

1. The Preamble, "Our Father which art in Heaven." The general duty we learn from it is this, that we come not suddenly and unseemly in our requests to him, but as much as may be to prepare our souls with fitting apprehensions and affections before we come to ask of him; with apprehensions of his goodness, that may draw us to him, in that he is our Father; and with apprehensions of his greatness that make us consider our distance, and come before him with reverence in that he is in heaven, *Eccles.* 5. 2, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few." God is in heaven and thou upon earth: it teacheth thee thy distance, and it is fit thou shouldest thoroughly digest that apprehension before thou ask, that thy asking may be with reverence. External reverence of itself is inconsiderable, but as it is the figure of that internal reverence that is in the soul. Where the external reverence is without the internal it is base and odious hypocrisy, a dead and a despised performance, a picture of piety without life. But the internal reverence of the mind cannot be without an external expression of it. The forms or natures that God hath put into every creature, are those which shape their external figure, in some proportion answerable to their internal form. And it is as impossible for an heart sensible of the majesty, glory, greatness and power of God, to come before him either with a petulant, saucy, presumptuous or unseemly carriage, as it is for the form of a lamb or a child to render itself either in the shape of a lion, or a wolf. Again, God is in heaven and thou upon earth: as thou hast a business to do to prepare thy heart with sense of thy distance, that thy desires may be with a suitable humility when thou prayest, so thou hast need of preparation to bring up thy heart out of that earth, wherein thou art, unto heaven, to desecrate that earthly heart of thine, that it may be fit to come into the presence of the God of heaven. When God beholds the highest things in nature,

the heavens, he humbles himself, he descends below his own excellency, *Psal.* 113. 6. And if thou art a suitor to this great king, it is fit thou shouldest come unto the throne of his majesty, and not expect that he should come to thy cottage to be importuned, though yet he doth this also in his great mercy and condecension; yet it is not fit for thee to expect it: again, thy lifting up of thy heart to him is thy advantage; the nearer thou drawest to his glory and presence, so it is to be with an humble and clean heart, the more thou wilt partake of his bounty and goodness, the fitter thy heart will be to have communion with him. The holy and glorious angels and souls departed partake more of his fulness and perfection than man doth, because by the purity of their nature they have a nearer approach to the fountain of good, than man hath; and the nearer or farther off the spirit of a man comes or keeps off from God, the more or less of his goodness he participates. Now in this act of prayer we endeavour to lay hold of his goodness and promises: necessary it is therefore we bring our hearts by preparation as near to him as we can. 1. That we may be near unto him; and in this nearness consists an advantage of communion with him. 2. That we may be like him; and that likeness is every day increased by our beholding of him, whereby we are in some measure translated into the same glory. 3. That we may be in our proper place. God hath communicated his goodness to all things according to their several degrees of perfection in those stations, wherein his own great and infinite wisdom placed them, and the place of man was nearer to God by his nature, than he can now arrive unto in this life in his own person, (though we have a high-priest that continually bears our names before our Father.) And certainly, if it be at any time seasonable for a man to wind up his heart in the greatest nearness to God, that he can do, it is when he comes before him in praises for the things he hath, and petitions for the things he wants. Learn therefore in general to bring up thy heart as near as thou canst to the great God in preparation and meditation, before thou offerest thy prayer, that that thy sacrifice may be mingled with a true fire, and thy soul may be raised up with the due consideration of what thou art about, and who thou art to deal withal.

Touching the particulars in this Preamble.

"Our Father." Two things are herein considerable: 1. How God is said to be our Father: 2. What frame or temper of heart and spirit

this blessed relation and conception of him, as a Father, ought to raise in us: especially when we come before him in prayer.

As to the first, God hath the appellation or relation of a Father principally in these reflects:

1. By Creation. Thus he is the Father of all things. But in as much as patrimony and filiation are relations of persons not of bare subsistency, properly therefore in this respect he is called Father in relation to angels and men: to men, *Isa.* 64. 8. "But now, O Lord, thou art our Father, we are the clay and thou our potter," *Mal.* 2. 10. "Have not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" *Luke* 3. 38. "Which was the son of Adam; which was the Son of God." And as to men, so in a more near relation to the souls of men, and the blessed angels who participate more immediately of his image and perfection, *Jam.* 1. 17. "The Father of lights." *Heb.* 12. 9. "The Father of spirits," *Zec.* 12. 2, "The former of spirits." *Job* 38. 7. "And all the sons of God shouted for joy."

2. By special susception, or undertaking either without an intervenient contract: thus he is pleased to own a more special paternity towards those that have most need of him.—*Psal.* lxv. 5. "A father to the fatherless:" or by an intervenient contract; thus he was a father in a more near relation to the Jewish people, who as a child is called by the name of his father, so they did as it were bear his name,—*Jer.* xiv. 9. "We are called by thy name, leave us not." *Isa.* lxiii. 16. "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us;" and accordingly he evinced himself toward them in all the care and tenderness of a father,—*Deut.* xxxii. 11. "As an eagle fluttereth over her young," &c. — *Hos.* xi. 1. "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and called my Son out of Egypt." But these relations are yet too large and spacious.

3. By adoption in Christ. Which relation is thus wrought, by an eternal stipulation between the Father and the Son; the Son was to take upon him our nature by a supernatural conception, and to stand as a public person and mediator between the Father and lapsed man, and appointed that as many as should by true faith lay hold on him, there should be a kind of union wrought between Christ and that believer, and in that union the Father looks upon all that which was in the believer as imputed to Christ, and all that which was in Christ, as imputed to the believer. Was there sin and guilt in the believer? it is laid on Christ, and he

bears all iniquities,—*Isa.* liii. 6. Is there righteousness in Christ? the believer hath that righteousness, "The righteousness which is of God by faith." Is Christ the first-born of God? *Psal.* lxxxix. 25, 26. Though we cannot partake of his primogeniture, yet we partake of his son-ship, *John* i. 12. As many as received him, to them he gave power to become the Sons of God. *John* xx. 17. "I ascend unto my Father, and to your Father, to my God, and to your God," *Gal.* iv. 5. "That we might receive the adoption of sons." And by virtue of this union we partake of the inheritance of sons, "Joint heirs with Christ," *Gal.* iv. 7. of the spirit of sons, *Gal.* iv. 6. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts," &c. And by virtue of this filiation we have the privileges of sons; "Access with boldness unto the Father," *Ephes.* ii. 19. Care and tenderness of our Father over us. *Matt.* vi. 32. "For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things;" audience from him, *John* xvi. 26. "At that day ye shall ask in my name, &c. for the Father himself loveth you." Now this appellation and relation of a father in the first entrance into prayers carries up our hearts unto these considerations.

1. That we should by all means labour to be in this relation to God, viz. That he should be our Father; for why do we call him so, unless he be so to us? and that we should not be contented barely with the relation unto him as we are men; for so were even the Athenians, who inscribed their altar to the Unknown God his offspring, *Acts* xvii. 28. nor with relation arising out of an external profession and covenant, but with that nearest relation of paternity, arising by our union with Christ.

2. And consequently that all our applications to God in prayer must be in, and through Christ, for through him is this relation wrought; and it is a relation of nearness and union, which is the greatest nearness. *Ephes.* ii. 13. "But now in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ; and 19. of the household of God;" our union unto God grows by our union to Christ, who is one with the Father, *John* xvii, 23. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one," and this is the meaning of asking in his name, *John* xvi. 26. Through him we have access to the Father," *Ephes.* ii. 18.

We learn with what affections we should come to him in our prayers, And these arise either from the con-

sideration of our duty, as children; or from the consideration of that which we are to expect from him as a father. Those of the first part are principally these; love, reverence, submission, and thankfulness.

1. Love to God. The very name of a Father imports in itself a relation of benefit, and consequently of love. God is the Father of thy being, as thou art a man, and of thy continual preservation; and if there were no more than this in this comprehensive name of Father, it is enough to take up the whole stock and compass of thy love. The motion from being to being is an infinite motion, and an act of infinite goodness as well as of infinite power, and deserves and challengeth the uttermost extent of thy love, as a just debt unto it; so that thou hast scarce a residue of love left within the compass of thy uttermost power, which thou owest not to this great love of thy Lord in giving thee a being; and if this common goodness of thy Lord requireth and deserveth all thy love to him as the Father of thy nature, what love dost thou owe him as he is pleased to be thy Father in a nearer relation? to be thy Father in Christ? and that after thou hadst rejected him and wert lost? and if thy debt of love, that thou owest to him as the Father of thy nature, be more large than the comprehension of thy power, how, or with what wilt thou pay that further debt of love, which thou owest to him for that undeserved, unsought for, superadded relation of thy Father by adoption? when he gave his own Son to die for thee, an enemy, that thou mightest receive the adoption of a Son? This is a love that passeth not only thy retribution, but also thy knowledge, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God, 1 *John*, iii. 1. And the love of God to us, as it is the meritorious cause of our love to him, so it is that which excites and fires our love to him, 1 *John*, iv. 19. "We love him, because he first loved us." And according to the measure we have of the apprehension of the love of God to us, according is the measure of our love to him again. This, therefore, is the first affection that the name of Father calls out, viz. "The intensest affection of our love, in that he hath given us a commission to call him Father, and Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren." *Heb.* ii. 21.

2. Reverence; and this is but a consequent of the former. Perfect love casts out fear, 1 *John* iv. 18. "But it is the mother of reverence, *Heb.* xii. 9. "We have had fathers

of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence, &c, *Mal.* i. 6, "If I be a Father, where is my honour? were there no other distance of nature between thy God and thee, but the distance and relation of a Father, it requires reverence of thee, especially when thou comest before him in thy prayers. And that inward reverence of thy soul will imprint a reverence in thy words, and in thy carriage; as all other affections and tempers of the soul fix a suitable correspondence upon the outward man, but especially when we consider he is our heavenly Father.

3. Submission to his will. Consider thy approach is to thy Father, which carries with it a relation of authority, especially considering he is a Father of wisdom, that knoweth what is fittest for thee, and a Father of mercies, that is oftentimes more merciful to thee in denying thee what thou askest than he could be in granting it; it is thy duty to ask what thou wantest, because he is thy Father; but not to limit him what he should grant.

4. "Thankfulness for all thou hast received; because as he is the author of thy being, so he is the fountain of all thy benefit.

5. And as the name of a Father carries upward these affections of love, fear, submission and thankfulness towards God, so it brings down those apprehensions of God, that are suitable to the business about which we are.

1. From the consideration that God is our Father thus placed in the entrance of this prayer, we have encouragement to make our access unto him with an humble boldness. When we consider the glory, and the majesty, and the purity of the great and infinite God, in whose sight the heavens are not clean, nor the stars pure, *Job*, xv. 15. & xxv. 5. that chargeth his angels with folly, and in his presence the cherubims cover their faces: how should dust and ashes, man that is a worm, under the apprehension of his majesty and glory, ever think that this glorious God should listen unto, or entertain his person or his prayers? when David considered but of the sun and moon and stars, which are but the works of his hands, he found a great disproportion between us and them. "What is man that thou shouldest be mindful of him?" *Psal.* viii. 4. Much more between us and their and our Creator; the Son of God, therefore, that knew his Father's will, and thoughts he beareth towards us, presents him to us in the brink of our prayers under the expression of a Father, that might invite us,

before he renders him under the apprehension of his being in heaven, that might estrange us: under the conception of the love and tenderness of a father, before conception of his majesty and glory. And is he thy Father? why shouldest thou not upon all occasions resort unto him? whither should a child go with boldness, if not to his father? and to such a father as he is pleased to render himself unto us, with more tenderness and gentleness than lies within the bowels of a natural father? *Isa.* xlix. 15. Can a woman, whose affections are most ardent and importunate, forget a child, a piece of herself, her sucking child, to whom she is engaged by an additional obligation of love and care, that she should not have compassion, when her natural love is heightened by a pitiful accurrance, of the son of her womb, the perfection of her conception? "Yea she may forget, yet I will not forget thee, saith the Lord," *Hos.* ii. 8. "How shall I give thee up Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I see thee as Zeboim? my heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger; for I am God and not man," *Hos.* ii. 3. "I taught Ephraim to go, leading him by the hand." Ephriam, like a weak child, was ready to stumble and fall upon every occasion, and like a froward child apt to snatch away his hand from him that led him: yet the affection of a father is not lost by the weakness or frowardness of a child, *Deut.* xxxii, 6, 11. "Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy father that bought thee? As an eagle stirreth up her nest and fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them and bareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead him." And all these, and a world of the like expressions in the book of God, to unveil the love of God to his creatures, and thereby to draw out an awful love to him, and an humble boldness to make an approach unto him, *Heb.* iv. 16. "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace;" and to bless our Redeemer, who by the price of his blood hath purchased this free liberty of access unto God as our Father, *Ephes.* iii. 12. "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence." Who as he hath purchased access for us, so when, notwithstanding that we are fearful and backward, and ashamed to come, he is pleased in the virtue of his own mediation to stand between the glory and brightness of the Father and us poor creatures, and to show

us more of his goodness and mercy than of his glory; and to receive our desires, and to bring both them and us into the presence of his Father, and our Father.

2. As this expression leads us unto God, and gives us access, so it gives us assurance of success in our petitions. This prayer, as is said, is a comprehensive prayer; we thereby in an abridgment ask whatsoever is necessary for this life or that to come; but the name of a Father is a comprehensive name; the petitions that thou art asking are large petitions, and the promise is yet more large, *John* xvi. 23, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you." *Matt.* vii. 7, "Ask, and it shall be given you:" but here is the foundation, thy application is to thy Father: *Matt.* vii. 11, "If ye being evil know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" Whatsoever thou canst find or expect from thy natural father, so much, and much more, mayest thou expect from thy heavenly Father: Patience, to bear with thy infirmities and failings, *Psal.* lxxviii. 18, Compassion, to pity thy suffering, *Psal.* ciii. 13. Goodness, to supply thy wants; justice, to avenge thy injuries; *Psal.* cv. 14, Protection, to defend thee from dangers, vigilancy and care, to support thee against temptations; mercy, to pardon thy backslidings, *Jer.* iii. 14, Skill, to interpret, and tenderness, to accept thy weak and stammering petitions; providence and bounty, abundantly to reward all thy sincere performances, *Luke* xii. 32, "Fear not, little flock, it is my Father's good will to give you a kingdom." And this consideration of God, as our Father, when we come before him in prayer, as it teacheth us our duty, so it doth most naturally teach us the three first petitions to desire the glory of his name, the increase of the manifestation of his kingdom and power, the full submission unto, and desire of the fulfilling of his will. And as that relation looks downward upon us, so it concludes the three last petitions, From whom shouldest thou desire or expect mercy to forgive thee, conveniences to supply thee, care and protection to preserve and deliver thee from evil, if not from a Father? and as from this appellation of a Father we gather confidence in his love, so in the next qualification or description of this Father, we gather confidence in his power.

"Which art in heaven," or heavenly Father, *Matt.* vi. 26. To denote, 1. The eminence of his glory and power. The heavens are



The Fall of Man.

the most eminent and glorious creatures that our eyes behold, and speak much of the glory and majesty of God, *Psal.* xix. 1, and in this adjunct of heavenly, we give him the acknowledgment and attribution of the greatness of his power and glory, *Psal.* i. 5, "For our God is in the heavens, and he hath done whatsoever he pleaseth.

2. Heaven the throne of his majesty, *Psal.* xi. 4, *Isa.* lxvi. 1, "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my foot-stool," *Psal.* lxviii. 4, "Extol him that rideth upon the heavens, *Deut.* xxxiii. 26, who rideth upon the heavens for thy help, and in his excellency upon the sky, 1 *Kings*, viii. 49, Heaven thy dwelling-place. Which though it be the seat of his glory, yet it is not the circumscription of his presence, 1 *Kings*, viii. 27, "The heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, *Psal.* cxiii. 4, "His glory is above heavens, *Isa.* lvii. 15, "The high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity," an incomprehensible infinitude, *Psal.* cxxxix. 8, "If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; and if I make my bed in hell, thou art there," *Isa.* xl. 22, "It is he that sitteth on the circle of the earth." So that his presence is in all places; and though, in respect of his creatures, the greatest manifestation of his presence is above the heaven, yet his infinite and essential glory is equally in all places. Now from this attribution we learn.

1. Our duty in prayer. As a Christian should always have his conversation in heaven, from whence he expects his Saviour,—*Phil.* iii. 20, so in a special manner when he comes to God in prayer. Hence prayer is called a drawing near to God,—*Heb.* x. 22, lifting up the heart unto God. Know therefore thou doest, or at least, shouldest, in prayer bring thy heart up into heaven before the throne of the infinite majesty; which imports, or enforceth these consequents.

2. Let thy spirit be mingled with thy prayers, for there is no other way to draw near to God, but by bringing thy spirit into his presence. He is a spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit; thy body is here upon the earth, and thy words vanish before they are gone far from thee. Thou canst not get before the presence of the Lord of heaven but with thy spirit and soul; and unless thy prayer be the drawing near of thy spirit to him, thy prayer is a provocation, and not a service; unprofitable and useless for thee, and unaccepted and not regarded by God; it dies, and is rotten in the earth, and it cannot come up to thy Father which is in heaven.

3. Let thy spirit be a pure spirit,

and thy prayers be pure prayers; for what hath any thing that is impure to do with heaven, a place of purity and holiness! None, but the "pure in spirit can see God," *Matt.* v. 8, and none but "pure hands are fit to be lifted up to him," 1 *Tim.* ii. 8, *Psal.* xxiv. 4. And that thy spirit may be pure, and fit to come up into this high and holy place, and to have communion with the holy and glorious God, get thy spirit, and soul, and conscience washed by the blood of Christ, and thy prayers mingled with the incense of Christ, *Rev.* viii. 3, and labour to get an inherent holiness, a pure and a sanctified heart, and from that will thy words, and thy conversation, and thy sacrifices (all which are but the emanation sand fruit of thy heart) be holy, and bear some, though a weak proportion, and particularly to that place, and to that person whither thou art sending thy prayers. And more especially labour to cleanse thy heart when thou art about to pray; because thy prayers are drawing near unto God, *Psal.* lxxiii. 28. The priests under the law, when they were to come near unto God in their administrations, were to be washed and clean from their natural and external impurities; and a leper was not suffered to come into the tabernacle; but what is that to the leprosy and impurity of thy spirit, that very part of thee that only can have immediate access to God? and what communion can there be between an holy God and an unholy soul? *Psal.* lxvi. 18. "If I regard iniquity in my heart God will not hear me." Consider, therefore, that thy approach is unto heaven, the dwelling-place of his majesty, and of his glory, and holiness becomes such an habitation, *Psal.* xciii. 5, but who then is fit for such communion? what is man that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? behold he putteth no trust in his saints, yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight, how much more abominable and filthy is men, which drinketh iniquity like water? *Job.* xv. 14, 15, 16. But for this, thy Saviour hath given thee an expedient; he taketh away the iniquity of thy holy things, and mingles thy sacrifice with his own incense, and covers thy impurities with his own righteousness, and if for all this the sense of thy own vileness cover thy heart with shame, and the burden of thy sins and corruptions keep thy soul under, that it cannot with that clearness and confidence look up into heaven, but, with the publican in the gospel, stand afar off, and scarce darest ask for anything, but what the sense of guilt enforceth, viz.

mercy to pardon thee; yet such is the goodness of God in Christ to thy low and humbled soul, that though thou hast scarce confidence enough to draw nigh unto God, yet he hath compassion enough to draw nigh unto thee, *Psal.* xxxiv. 18, "The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart." And though thy laden soul can scarce get up into heaven, into the presence of thy Creator, yet he will bring down heaven into thy soul, *Isa.* lvii. 15, Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

3. Let thy prayer be full of reverence with the whole man: for as thou comest to a Father, and in that relation thou owest him reverence, so thou comest to a heavenly Father, the great Lord and Judge of all things. *Pet.* i. 17, "And if ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's works, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." And as a Father, and such a Father calls for thy reverence, so especially when thou considerest that thou comest to this great king in his throne, in the place of his majesty and glory. And therefore this expression is added, to take up the whole latitude of thy thoughts, with the highest apprehensions of the glory and majesty of the Lord, before whom thou comest, and that thou mayest consider the infinite distance that is between thee and the Lord of heaven; *Isa.* lv. 9, "For as the heaven is higher than the earth, so are my thoughts than your thoughts, and my ways than your ways." And upon this consideration to admire and magnify the goodness and mercy of this great king, that is pleased to admit poor sinful worms to come into his presence, and beg for our lives, and for our souls, with a promise of mercy and acceptation.

4. Let thy prayers be full of intention: Thou dost, or shouldest, bring up thy soul into heaven, into the presence of the great and glorious God; and what should thy wandering thoughts, thy earthly business do there? leave them at the foot of the hill, when thou ascendest into the mount of God. Consider, the person to whom thou comest, exactly views and observes the frame, and connexion, and workings, and motions of thy thoughts and desires, and whether they go along with thy words, or with thy external deportment: and if they do not, so much of thy prayer is not only lost, but a

mockery and abuse of thy Maker. And as the consideration of the person to whom thou makest thy address, so the place where thou comest doth not suit with those impertinent and vain diversions. Therefore when thou prayest do it considerately, advisedly, and with the whole intention of thy soul, *Eccl.* v. 2, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart utter anything hastily before God, for God is in heaven and thou upon earth."

2. As this expression teacheth our duty towards God in prayer, so it teacheth what to expect from him.

1. Hence learn the all-seeing eye of God, that is acquainted with all thy wants, and with thy desires. It was a mistaken use that was made of his being in heaven, *Job* xxii. 14. "Thick clouds are a covering to him that he seeth not, and he walketh in the circuit of heaven." No, but *Psal.* xxiii. 13. "The Lord looketh from heaven, he beholdeth all the sons of men," *Psal.* xi. 4. The distance of the place is no disadvantage to his sight or hearing. Again, Though heaven be the seat of his glory, yet all places are filled with his presence; but especially he is nigh to them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth, *Psal.* lxv. 18. Is nigh to such as be of a broken heart, *Psal.* xxxiv. 11 Is round about his people, *Psal.* cxxv. is nigh unto them in all they call upon him for, *Deut.* iv. 7, will bow down his ear to hear, *Psal.* xxxi. 2. will bow the heavens and come down for their good, *Psal.* xviii. 9. So that thy prayers have no great distance to go, for all places are heaven where God is, and he is in all places, especially where two or three are gathered together in his name to call upon him.

2. Hence learn the all-sufficient and almighty power of God, *Psal.* cxv. 3, Our God is in heaven, he hath done whatsoever he pleased. As the relation of a Father carrieth with it a fulness of love, to be willing to grant thy largest requests, so the consideration that he is a heavenly Father carrieth with it a fulness of power to grant them. These considerations of the love and power of God bear up the heart in prayer, as once Aaron and Hur did Moses's hands, *Exod.* xvii. 12. And therefore they are both placed in the porch of this prayer, like the pillars of Jachin and Boaz, in Solomon's temple, 1 *Kings*, vii. 21. To 'stablish and strengthen thy heart in prayer to God.

3. As the consideration of heavenly, or which art in heaven, carries thy heart to confidence in his power and all-sufficiency to grant

thy petitions, so it improves thy faith in his infinite tenderness and goodness. When thou comest to the father of thy flesh, thy earthly father, that relation imports and carries with it much love and compassion, as hath been observed; but though he be thy father, yet he is an earthly father; and as his power and sufficiencies are narrow and weak, and not adequate to the extent of thy wants and desires, so his affections are limited, and mingled with the passions and frowardness of his temper or age. A woman may forget the son of her womb, *Isa.* xlix. 15. And the hands of the pitiful woman may seethe her own children, *Lam.* iv. 10, And fathers are apt to provoke their own children, *Ephes.* vi. 4. But were there not mixtures of distempers in the affections of parents; yet their affections are finite; and such is our condition, that in one day we should out-sin all that stock of patience to bear, and mercy to forgive that the most tender earthly father ever had or could be capable of. We stand in need every day of the infinite bowels of a heavenly Father, to bear and pardon and receive us, as of infinite power to supply and support us, *Isa.* lv. 7, "Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon: for my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways my ways, saith the Lord: for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." *Hos.* xiii. 9. "Oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help. I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God and not man, *Hos.* xi. 9. As if he should have said, Were all the compassions, and bowels, and patience, and tenderness in the world combined in one man, yet thy sins are grown to that height, and thy provocation to that perfection, that all that patience were too weak to bear, and all that compassion too small to pardon thee: thou hast outsinned all the compass and extent of a created patience; but I am God, and not man, I have patience enough for all this to bear with thee; and mercy enough abundantly to pardon thee, *Jer.* iii. 12, "Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever; only acknowledge thine iniquity that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God," The omnipotence of God runneth through all his attri-

utes, and is no less seen in his mercy to pardon, than in his power to create, *Num.* xiv, 17. 18. "And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, the Lord is long-suffering and of great mercy."

Now I come to the requests themselves.

1. "Hallowed be thy name." Wherein shall be considered.

1. What we are to understand by the name of God.

2. What we are to understand by hallowing or sanctifying his name.

As to the first. The ways of God and his judgments are unsearchable, and past finding out, *Rom.* ii. 33. and if his ways are such, how infinitely unsearchable is his essence and nature? the angels that are by God endued with an understanding more receptive of this light than ours is, do behold his face, *Matt.* xviii, 10. But yet that light is too bright for their pure eyes, and too wide for those perfect intelligences to comprehend: but mortal man cannot behold his face. *Exod.* xxxiii, 20. "Thou canst not see my face: for no man can see me, and live." But yet such is his mercy and condescension to his creatures, that he communicates so much of the knowledge of himself unto us, as is convenient for us, and sufficient to bring us to a more perfect vision of him, when our souls shall be endued with an angelical capacity to see him, *Matt.* v. 8. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." And the means whereby we know him, is the manifestation of his name unto us, *John* xvii. 6. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me." The name of the Lord therefore imports these two things.

1. That which he hath been pleased to manifest unto us in his word concerning himself, his essence and attributes.

2. That glory and honour, which, as a beam from the sun, doth arise from that manifestation.

1. Touching the first, God hath been pleased to reveal himself unto us by names and expressions whereby we may have some conceptions concerning him; and though every attribute given to God in the scripture, is a part of his name; yet he hath chosen some expressions which he hath in a special manner called his name, as being of a more special use to us, and therefore are to have a greater impression upon us; sometime to signify his absolute and independent being. *Exod.* iii. 13. "And Moses said unto God, when I come to the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you,

and they shall say to me, what is his name? what shall I say unto them? and God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM. Thus shalt thou say unto them, I AM hath sent me." Sometimes to signify his authority, *Isa.* xlii. 8. "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another;" Sometimes to signify his power, *Jer.* x. 16. "The Lord of hosts is his name." Sometimes to signify the immensity of his majesty, *Exod.* vi. 3, "I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them." *Psal.* lxxxiii. 18. "Thou whose name is Jehovah." *Deut.* xxviii. 58. That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God. Sometimes to signify his purity, *Exod.* xxxiv. 14. "Whose name is jealous." *Psal.* xciii. 3, "Whose name is holy." But above all, when God himself was pleased, at the requests of his creature, to make his goodness to pass before him, and to proclaim his name, consisting of all the ingredients necessary for our knowledge and use, *Exod.* xxxiv. 6, 7. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty, &c. And this was the name that our Saviour came to comment upon, showing his mercy in pardoning us, and his justice in punishing our sins, in his Son; his truth in fulfilling that first gospel preached in Paradise, the seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head. And this name of God he manifested to his disciples and to us.

2. The name of the Lord is taken for that glory and honour that is due unto his essence, attributes and works, the reflection of his own perfection. He hath proclaimed himself merciful and gracious, and his works of mercy reflect glory upon this part of his name; *Isa.* xlviii. 9, 11. For my name's sake I will defer mine anger: for how shall my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory to another: he proclaimeth his strength and power; and the words of his power reflect glory upon that part of his name; *Jer.* x. 6. "His name is great in power." *Jer.* xxxii. 20. "Which hast set signs in Egypt, &c. And hast made thee a name as at this day." He hath proclaimed that he is long-suffering; and the works of his patience towards our backslidings and rebellions reflect glory upon that part of his name: *Psal.* cvi. 8. "Nevertheless he saved them for his name's

sake, that he might make his mighty power known:" the power of his patience to forbear them, as well of his strength to deliver them. And thus, *Psal.* lxviii. 10. According to thy name, so is thy praise in all the earth: that is, all the works of God, and his dispensations carry an impression of the glory and truth of some attribute of his name, *Psal.* cxxxiv. 2. "I will praise thy name for thy loving kindness and thy truth, for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name: that is, thy word hath proclaimed thy name to be merciful, bountiful, &c. And all the course of thy government in the world doth justice the truth of that word of thine, and doth attest it, every part of it bringing back to some attribute of that name of thine, glory, and a just suffrage unto the truth of thy word.

Hallowed, or sanctified, be thy Name.

This imports three things:

1. That all the works of God, and the actions and occurrences of the world, may bear upon them, and in them, an impression of the glory of God, of his power, majesty, wisdom, goodness, justice. That they may have upon them that beauty, comeliness and usefulness, that he originally did put upon them. God made all things for his glory, and in conformity thereunto they were in their original full of beauty and order; and the excellence of the work did speak the perfection of the workman; but the sin of men and angels brought upon some parts of his works a deformity and disorder, *Gen.* iii. 17, "I have cursed the ground for thy sake." And though in that curse, and in all other the consequence of sin, there is still a glory of the justice of God in punishing, and of his wisdom in managing of them; yet much of the beauty of the works themselves is taken from them by that disorder that sin hath brought upon them. When we pray therefore that the name of God may be hallowed, we desire that, as much as may stand with his will, all things may bear in them the impression of his glory, that they may have a conformity, not only to his will, but to his good pleasure; that in all things the wisdom, and goodness, and power of God may be conspicuous; that he would in Christ take out that disorder and curse, that by sin defaced the creature; that all things may in the highest measure be restored to their primitive perfection; that all the occurrences of the world, and all the actions of men and angels, may carry in them the most eminent inscription of his presence, wisdom and goodness, and may be directed

with the best advantage to his glory. Our love to God makes that which he wills to be our wills; and as he wills his own glory, so it makes us to desire his glory; and though we are to leave the particular manifestation thereof to his wisdom, yet it must be our chief desire that all things may, in the highest measure, move to his honour, and bear the inscription of it. And this is that praise that David calls for from all creatures, *Psal.* cxlviii. 150.

2. In as much as God hath endued reasonable creatures with understanding and capacity, to discover the wisdom and goodness of God in his creatures and works, we are to desire that the works of God may not only carry in them a native or secret impression of his power, wisdom, and other attributes, but that it may be made evident, and discovered and manifested to the understandings of men and angels, and that they may discern it, and be convinced of it, *Psal.* ix. 16, that the Lord may be known by the judgment that he executes, *Psal.* lxiv. 9. "And all men shall fear, and declare the works of God, for they shall wisely consider his doings, *Psal.* lviii. 11, "So that a man shall say, verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth, *Psal.* cii. 2. That as his works are great, so they may be sought out; that as all the works of God contain an objective glory of God in them, so that the same may be seen and observed by those parts of his creation, men and angels, that have a capacity to receive it; and for that purpose that objective glory of God is put into all creatures, and this capacity or receptivity is placed in intellectual creatures that they may observe and discern the glory of his wisdom, goodness, and truth, and all other his attributes, in the creatures.

3. And in as much as he hath magnified his word above all his name, *Psal.* cxxxviii. 2. That is, he hath evinced the truth of his word, and every part thereof in all the course of his providence and works, that men and angels may discern and understand the fulfilling and making good of his word. The sun shining upon a glass doth cause a reflection of his beams, but many may not see it, either because they are blind and cannot see it, or they look another way, or stand in such a position that they do not see it; and so it is with the works of God. When I pray that his name may be hallowed, I pray that God would be pleased to open the eyes of men by his spirit; to put them in such a frame and position, that they may discern the power and wisdom, and goodness and justice, and truth of God, that reflects from his works

that these impressions of his may not be lost unto us, nor the glory of them lost unto him.

3. That the observations and discovery of the truth and goodness, &c. of God, may not only work a conviction thereof in our understandings and judgments (for thus it doth even to the devils themselves) but that conviction may raise up in the minds and affections those suitable consequences, that should arise from such a conviction, such as are these: 1. A subscription and setting to our seal, that God is true, and just, and merciful. In the work of conviction we are in a manner passive, but herein we are active, when in our hearts we do cheerfully and willingly subscribe and attest to all that goodness and truth whereof we are thus convinced. 2. An inward admiration of the power, truth, and glory of God, that is thus discovered unto us. The natural effect of great discoveries is admiration, 2 *Thes.* i. 10. "To be admired in all them that believe." 3. Blessing of that goodness of his, not only that is discovered unto us, but that so far condescends to his creature, as to show us so much of his glory, truth and greatness. 4. An attribution of infinitely more glory, majesty, mercy, goodness, and all perfection unto him, than possibly I can discover by any of these manifestations, considering that all his works put together cannot speak his fulness. If I could see all the glory of God, that all the works of God in the whole world do bear upon them, yet I must needs conclude in reason, that they are infinitely short of that perfection which he hath in him: for he must needs have a residue of power and wisdom, infinitely more than commensurate to all his works put together: but alas! I see but a part of his works, and so narrow is my capacity, that I find plainly I cannot reach to the bottom of any work, nor search it out, nor his power, wisdom and glory, that lies in a fly or worm, to the uttermost; and yet I see so much as doth astonish me, and confound me, even in the least of all his workings; what measure then must his own fulness amount unto? And this made David, and the other saints of God, whose eyes he had opened, even to lose themselves in the contemplations and expressions of the goodness and greatness of God. 5. A return of infinite fear and reverence, love, dependence, submission and obedience, and of all the choicest and sweetest motions of our souls to him, as the just desert of his goodness and truth, and the just tribute due to his majesty and glory. And this is the sanctifying of the Lord of hosts; *Isa.* viii. 17. And thus he will be sanctified by all them that

draw near unto him, *Lev.* x. 3. The sanctifying of the Lord in the heart, 1 *Pet.* iii. 15.

4. And as these affections and motions are made in the heart, so by all external expressions of the tongue, to evidence that inward conviction and affection of the soul; and as much as in us lies, to propagate and proclaim to all the world the glory due to God, by acknowledging openly his truth, 1 *Kings* xviii. 39. When the people saw the miracle of the fire devouring the water, they fell on their faces and said, "The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God." By ascribing greatness, *Deut.* xxxii.; strength, *Psal.* lxviii. 34; glory, *Psal.* xcvi. 8, unto his name; by publishing his name, *Deut.* xxxii. 3. Singing forth his honour, *Psal.* lxvi. 2. Exalting his name, *Psal.* xxxiv. 3. "Causing it to be had in remembrance *Psal.* xlv. 27, Magnifying his works, *Job* xxxvi. 24, By inviting and exciting all the creatures in the the world, according to their uttermost activity, to praise his name, *Psal.* cxlviii. 5. Out of the abundance of the heart, thus possessed with the sense of the perfection of God, the mouth will speak.

5. That from the same principle in the heart, the lives of men and angels may bring glory and honour to God; that is, by conformity of their natures and lives to the will of God concerning them. Other creatures, by a passive conformity unto the will of God, bring glory unto him, viz. by moving as they are moved by those natural instincts that are put in them; but to men and angels God hath given that honour to have in them an active principle, not only to be conformed, but to conform to the will of God, and to bring glory to his name: and when by our sin and contracted corruption mankind hath disabled himself to exercise that power, which God once gave him to glorify his Creator, Christ came to restore him again to such a condition, that he might actively bring glory to God by an active conformity to the mind and will of God, 2 *Cor.* v. 15, For this cause "he died, that they which live should not live to themselves, but unto him that died for them, *Tit.* ii. 14, *ad idem.* And this was a principal part of that reconciliation that he wrought, viz. as for the things that were past, reconciling God to man by forgiveness and pardon, so for the time to come reconciling man to God by conformity to Him and his will. Sin made an unlikeness of man to God, and thereby destroyed the image of God in man; for an image consists in the likeness of another thing. Christ came to restore that image again, *Colos.* iii. 10. And that not to rest merely in

the internal dispositions of the soul, but that, as he that hath called us is holy, we should be holy in all manner of conversation, 1 *Pet.* i. 13, Which is impossible to be severed, so that the former should be without the latter; for, as "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks," so out of the same abundance the hand worketh; and the sanctification of the mind can as ill be contained within the heart without some expression in the life, as any other temper or disposition of the mind can be restrained from discovering itself. That communion, that Moses had with God in the mount, imprinted a glory on his face; and that image of God, the conformity of the heart unto him, will shine through into the life; and that out of a double principle: 1. As a co-natural consequence of the inward disposition. 2. Out of the love and obedience to God, *Matt.* v. 16, "That men may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." So that when I pray that the name of God may be sanctified, I do desire that God would in Christ re-imprint his image upon man, that he would renew him in the spirit of his mind, and restore him to a conformity to his divine will, which is sanctification; 1 *Thes.* iv. 3, And that the outward conversation of men may be suitable to this inward conformity, in all obedience to the good pleasure of God; that as they profess his name, so they may appear to be his workmanship, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," *Ephes.* ii. 10, And walk worthy God, 2 *Thes.* ii. 12, That others beholding their good works may glorify God, 1 *Pet.* ii. 12.

Now the opposite to this petition, is, blasphemy, cursing the name of God (for to that height of villainy the corruption of nature hath risen) that that fearful and terrible name, *Psal.* xcix. 3, *Deut.* xxviii. 58, hath not escaped the blasphemous tongues of men, despising his majesty, *Job* xxi. 15, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him? *Exod.* v. 2, "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?" Taking his name in vain, using of it lightly or irreverently. It is a terrible name and not to be used without a summoning up of all the awe and reverence of our hearts: or falsely, either in solemn oaths, swearing falsely by his name; or pretending messages from him that he never sent, *Jer.* xiv. 14, Prophesying lies in his name, whereby a dishonour is brought upon his truth. Pride, arrogancy, and self-admiration, these intercept the glory due unto God, and usurp that which is only due unto him, and most dear unto him, *Isa.* xlviii. 11, "My glory will not I give to another." There-

fore God doth in a special manner hate, *Prov.* vi, 17, *Prov.* ix, 13. and resist it and them, *James* iv, 6. When Herod intercepted the glory of the people, and entertained it, and gave not God the glory, the angel of the Lord smote him, *Acts* ii, 23. And when the great king was puffed up with the greatness of his glory and power, then the message comes, that the kingdom is departed from him, *Dan.* iv. 13. And commonly God takes that season to punish the whole stock of sins, that a man hath committed, when his heart is most lifted up: *Prov.* xvi. 18. "Pride goeth before destruction." Again, presumptuous sins, these bid defiance to the name of God, to his truth, his justice, his power, his presence, *Deut.* xxix. 20. The jealousy of God will smoke against such a man. Scandalous sins in those that bear or profess the name of God, 2 *Sam.* xii. 14, by this, occasion is given to the enemies of God to blaspheme. Inadvertence and want of consideration of the works of God. "Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operations of his hands: therefore shall he destroy them, and not build them up, *Psal.* xxviii. 5. God therefore doth dispense many of his works of providence that men should wisely consider of his doings, and declare his work, *Psal.* xliv. 9. This inadvertence partly disappointeth God of his end, and robbeth him of his glory. Misapplication of events either to false causes, idols, fate, fortune, or only to second causes, without the due attribution of all to the most wise and powerful counsel of the mighty Lord, *Deut.* viii. 17. 18, "And thou say in thy heart, my power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth; but thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth." So for promotion, *Psal.* lxxv. 6, Victory, *Isa.* x. 5. "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, xiii, but he saith, by the strength of mine hand have I done this, and by my wisdom." And as in things concerning others, this observation is to be used, so principally in the occurrences and providences concerning thyself: to labour to know that all things that befal thee come from the most wise and just hand of God; in all thy blessings acknowledge his mercy, and labour to find him in them; in all thy afflictions acknowledge his justice and his wisdom; labour to find out the cause, and give him the glory.

Now concerning the order of this petition; it fell not in the first place by chance; but he that was the wisdom of the Father placed it there upon most just reasons:

1. The glory of God is that which is first to be sought for; because it is the chief end of God in all things, and that which he principally intended. He made all things for his glory. The first and highest duty of man is to love God, and love to God will carry the heart to desire that first, which God first wills; in so much as if the glory of God must be lost, or the soul that loves him, the perfection of love will choose the preservation of his glory, rather than of itself, if it were possible. *Exod.* xxxii. 33, *Rom.* ix. 3.

2. It is the justest, and only tribute that all creatures can return to God for their being and blessing. Such is his infinite self-sufficiency, that it is impossible he can receive any good from them, that receive their being from him, *Job* xxxv. 7, "If thou be righteous what givest thou him?" *Psal.* xvi. 2, "My goodness extendeth not to thee." But the return of the honour or glory, and acknowledging of his goodness in all that the creature can give, and that he is pleased to accept, *Psal.* l. 15, "I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me," *Psal.* cxvi. 12, What shall I return unto the Lord for all his benefits to me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. *Rev.* iv. 11, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." And according to this debt of duty, which the creatures owe to God for their being, so we find them, according to their several capacities and conditions, bringing in their tribute, *Rev.* v, "And every creature which is in heaven, and in the earth and in the sea, heard I, saying, blessing, honour, glory, and power be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

3. It is the best preparation for the heart that approacheth to God in prayer to be first taken up withal: If in the ordinary actions of our nature the glory of God should affect our heart, and be the end at which we should aim, 1 *Cor.* x. 31, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God:" And if the Son of God in this pattern of prayer begins his petitions with the sanctifying of his name, it is certainly most necessary that the heart of him that sets upon this duty be taken up with the consideration of the honour and majesty of him who will be sanctified by all that draw near unto him; and to carry that end through all our prayers; lest while we repeat the words of this petition, we take the name of God in vain,

seemingly praying for the glorifying of that name, which we at the same time dishonour; either for want of a due consideration of his majesty, or for want of making his glory the rule and end of our prayers. This first petition therefore requires that the heart be duly affected with the glory of that name which it invokes, and duly acted and directed to that glory; and that this petition be drawn through all the rest of our requests.

These ensuing considerations therefore arise from the placing of this petition first in this prayer:

1. As thou prayest that his name be hallowed, so in all thy requests labour to sanctify the Lord in thy heart; sanctify him in his greatness and majesty with honourable and reverent thoughts of him in thy heart, with an awful and humble carriage both of thy inward and outward man, as in the presence of the great and glorious King of heaven and earth: sanctify him in his authority and sovereignty, by calling upon him in obedience to his command and will, who hath commanded it; by acknowledgment of thy dependence upon him: sanctify him in his power and all-sufficiency, by casting thyself upon him, who is mighty to save, and to fulfil thy most extensive and large requests: sanctify him in his goodness and mercy, which is infinitely more large to pardon thy sins, to supply thy wants, and to fill thee with all good things, than thy necessities or the widest compass of thy soul can be to ask: sanctify him in his truth and faithfulness, by a recumbence and resting upon his promises, That no one thing shall fail of all the good things that he hath spoken, That no man shall seek his face in vain: that he that hath said, Whatsoever thou shalt ask in his Son's name, he will give it; that hath granted us access unto him upon the purchase of his Son's blood, will in no sort reject those requests which he himself hath commanded thee to make.

2. As thou prayest in the first place that his name may be sanctified, so let that be the end of all thy requests. Be sure thou ask not anything which may not be suitable to that end, much less contrary to it. And in what thou askest agreeable to that end, let it be likewise for that end. Ask not thy daily bread for thy lusts, but that thou mayest glorify him by it, and for it. Ask not pardon for thy sin barely for thy ease from punishment, much less to make room for new offences, but that thereby his mercy and truth may be magnified, and his creature restored to a condition actively to serve him and glorify him. The end is first in intention, and is that

which draws out all the actions, and orders and directs them to that end; and every action tastes and relisheth of that end: since therefore the sanctifying of the name of God is or should be the chief end, and therefore is first in thy requests, let all thy requests and prayers be primarily and chiefly directed to this, that is or should be, thy chiefest end.

3. As the glory of God should be the chief end of thy desires, so consequently must it be the measure of them. That which is the chiefest end must controul and overrule all other subordinate ends if they come in competition with it. For as it is of greatest value, so it is of greatest force. Whatsoever therefore thou askest, let it be still with subordination to the glory of God; and be rather contented to be disappointed in thy other inferior ends, than that this should in the least degree be disappointed: only know, and rest assured of this truth, that such is the great goodness and wisdom of God, that he hath placed all those requests, which are of absolute necessity to be granted thee, in such an order, and path, that the granting of them always consists with his glory, and whilst thou seekest them, thou canst not miss of glorifying him; and therefore thou mayest be sure the making of his glory the measure of thy request shall never disappoint thee in them: such as are the pardoning thy sins, the delivering thee from being finally overcome with spiritual evil: but thy other requests, for temporal benefits or deliverances, or the particular circumstances of those other, as manifestation or assurance of pardon, the degrees of spiritual blessings, or the seasons of granting them, these may not always lie in the road-way of his glory. Be content in these to wait upon him, and let them still be asked with subordination to this great end; but be assured that by preferring his glory as thy chief end, and subjecting the fulfilling of thy request to the glory of God, thou shalt be no loser in the end. Never any man was a loser, nor ever shall be, that principally intends the glory of God, though to the disappointment of his own particular ends. Thou hast done thy duty in asking, and in asking with this restriction, if it tend most for the glory of God. And thou hast done thy duty in being contented, and rejoicing that thy very request is disappointed, if God receive glory thereby; for thou hast that which thou didest in the first place desire; and had thy particular request been granted, and the glory of thy Maker suffered thereby, thou hadst been disappointed in this first and great

petition, "Sanctified be thy name;" which thou hast carried along with thee as the qualification of all the rest of thy requests, and as that which thou hast as it were prayed over again in every other petition thou hast made. Assure thyself, if thou canst take delight in the glory of God, though to thy own particular damage, God will more abundantly recompense thy seeking of his glory, than that very petition which is denied could have done, if granted. Thou servest a bountiful Maker, that will surely recompense thy love of his glory above thy own particular advantage. And thou servest a wise master, that will recompense thee in such a kind, or at such a season, as shall be more suitable, and more comfortable, than if thou hadst been thy own carver. And this thou shalt clearly and sensibly find, that which thou didst in the first place ask, is granted in kind, *viz.* the honour of God; and that which thou didst ask, for thyself, though denied in kind, is the more granted in value, for thy own particular benefit. Our Saviour prayed that the bitter cup of death might pass from him, yet with submission to the will and glory of God, *Matt.* xxvi. 39, yet his soul must be made an offering for sin; and it was so. The glory and the truth of God required it: yet he was heard in that he feared, *Heb.* v. 7. he suffers him to die, but raiseth him from death; and he saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied, *Isa.* liii. 11. Thou prayest for deliverance from any affliction, from a disease, from poverty, for knowledge or assurance in such a degree. It may be it will not be so much for the glory of God to grant it, or to grant it yet, as for the present to deny it. First therefore pray, thy name be hallowed, and though I am for the present denied, it is enough; I am abundantly answered if God be glorified, though I be denied. Thou shalt find that none that wait upon him shall be ashamed; if he grant thee not deliverance, he will give thee sufficient grace; if he deny thy recovery, he will give thee patience; if he deny thee riches, he will give thee contentedness; if he deny thee that measure of grace he will grant thee humility; if he deny thee that degree of assurance he will give thee dependence. So that though thou walk in darkness for a while, and hast no light, yet thou shalt trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon thy God, *Isa.* i. 10, such is the goodness of God, that while we seek his glory in the first place, and other things with subordination to it, our other request shall be granted either in kind or compensation.

Thy Kingdom Come.

The kingdom of God hath several acceptations:

1. His universal kingdom. The kingdom of his providence, which extendeth to all the actions and events of all his creatures, even to the falling of a sparrow. *Psal.* ciii. 19, "The Lord hath prepared his throne in heaven; his kingdom ruleth over all. *Psal.* lxvi. 7. "He ruleth by his power for ever, his eyes behold the nations." And this he doth by planting originally in his creatures their several laws or rules, by which they move; by a derivation of a continual influence whereby they are supported and preserved in their several motions, operations, and beings, which if he should withdraw but one moment, all things would return unto their nothing; but correcting and overruling of all things, sometimes contrary to their nature, to show his freedom and sovereignty; but always by the mingling and interweaving of the actions and motions of one creature with another; by which conjunctures, though to us accidental, he brings about most wise and various events according to his own counsel: so that while natural agents move necessarily according to their natures, voluntary agents move freely according to their liberty, contingent agents move and are moved contingently; yet every one of them apart, and all of them together, are guided and managed to the most infallible fulfilling of his most wise and free counsel. And by this kingdom all things in the world, though to us seemingly casual and confused, are led to ends, and by means, which they themselves neither see nor intend. But the same is admirably evinced and discovered in the sacred history; wherein we see how his determinate and positive counsels are most infallibly, and yet most strangely brought about, through divers variety of actions and events, seemingly most casual, sometimes expressly contrary, but always besides the minds, intentions, or designs of the instruments and means, as is evident among divers others, so especially in these, *viz.* that counsel of God, *Gen.* xv. 13. and strange conjectures that were used to effect it, that happened from the dislike that grew between Joseph and his brethren, till the going of Jacob into Egypt, and the prophecy of *Gen.* xv. 16. and the strange varieties that were used to fulfil it, from the time that the Egyptian king grew jealous of them, till their coming into Canaan; that ever to be admired counsel and promise of God of sending Christ, and his suf-

fering for mankind, first manifested in Paradise, *Gen.* iii. 15, and all the several predictions of him and concerning him, and the most wonderful connexion of millions of events, many of them seemingly inconsiderable, all of them seemingly casual, through the whole series of 4000 years led on to the fulfilling of it, even from the sin of Adam till the death of Christ, and the revelation of that mercy, for the sake of which the world was created. To these may be added the counsels and prophesies of the rejection of the Jews, the desolation of the temple, the conversion of the Gentiles: for the most certain fulfilling whereof it is most conspicuous, that all the conjunctures of natural, voluntary, casual agents and events were most infallibly and certainly managed by the most powerful hand of God. And this kingdom is not that which is principally intended in this petition; for this kingdom hath been, and is come, even since the creation; only it should be our desire, that the true and wise knowledge and observation of this kingdom may enter into the hearts of all men, that thereby we may admire and adore his wisdom and power in the governing and disposing of all things; that we may depend upon his all-sufficiency, submit unto the dispensations of his government, attribute all the successes, events, and occurrences in the world to his justice, power and providence.

2. His kingdom over his reasonable creatures, men and angels, which though they were under the general kingdom of his providence in the consideration above mentioned, yet they are under a more especial kingdom than other creatures. To these he hath given understanding and will, and so they are capable not only of a subjection to the will of his counsel, as they are creatures; but of an active obedience to the will of his command, (as they are reasonable creatures) and so are subjects of his justice in rewards and punishments, as well as of his power. And in reference to this kingdom it is said, *Psal.* lxxxix. 14. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." And *Psal.* xlv. 6. "The sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre." Now the administration of his kingdom consisteth especially in these things: 1. In giving the children of men a law to be their rule. 2. In dispensing rewards and punishments according to the obedience or disobedience of this law. 3. In protection.

1. As touching the law given to man: In the first creation of man he did acquaint man with his will and mind, and surely by some special manifestation of it, did reveal that

law unto him which should be a rule of righteousness to him and all his posterity. And as he gave to all things propensions, inclinations, and motions suitable to the several degrees of their beings, so to man he gave a law or rule suitable to his nature, and by a manifestation convenient for the condition of his nature. And though man by his fall introduced that disorder and disconformity to that law, whereby he became unable to keep it, yet many of those principles of righteousness, which God had manifested unto him, he retained in his knowledge, and traduced to his posterity. And these as they grew corrupted by the corruption of our nature, and forgotten, so he did re-imprint them upon men by the several acts of his providence: sometimes by new publication of this law unto some persons, which was by that means traduced over to divers others: thus the law given to Noah, the law given to the Jews, was questionless propagated and derived over to others by tradition and relation; sometimes by enlightening and exciting men of eminence, as divers of the heathen lawgivers, who were eminent in their generations: but most ordinarily and universally sending down into the consciences of men some discoveries of his will, and inclinations to acknowledge them, and to obey them, *Rom.* ii. 15, a law written in their hearts, their consciences bearing witness. So that there can scarcely be found any time or person wherein God's providence did not by some of these ways convey at least some directions of righteousness, which should be the rule by which they should live, and by which they should be judged. So that they that have sinned without the law, shall perish without the law, and they that have sinned in the law, should be judged by the law, *Rom.* ii. 12. That is, somewhat of the will of God touching righteousness is derived to all men, though to some more, to some less; to some by a more clear dispensation; to some by a more obscure dispensation: yet such is the exact justice of God, that though he might judge all mankind according to the exactest rule of his law, given to man even in his innocency, yet, that every mouth may be stopped, he will judge them according to so much of his law as he hath communicated to them. He will not judge the heathen that never heard of the law of God, so clearly published to the Jews, by that law, but by that manifestation or conviction of righteousness that he hath. Thus if he sin he shall be condemned without the law, that is, without calling in any other

law to judge him by, than that law which hath been in some measure declared unto him.

2. As the administration of this kingdom over men is by giving them a law, so there is likewise an execution of that law by rewards of obedience, and by punishments of disobedience. And this God published in the infancy of the world; *Gen.* iv. 7. "If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou dost not well, sin lies at the door," *Psal.* lxii. 12. "Thou renderest to every man according to his works." Disobedience to this law of God obligeth to punishment upon a double ground: 1. As a natural and a just consequence of an unjust violation of a just duty, in as much as every creature owes an infinite subjection and obedience to the sovereign commands of him that gives it being. 2. As a consequence of that sanction that is expressly annexed to the law so given; in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die the death. Obedience on the other side is followed with a reward, not out of a natural consequent, or a proportion between the obedience and the reward; for every creature owes obedience to God, though there were no reward at all; we have therein done but our duty, and God cannot be a debtor to the best of his creatures, for their best works, *Job* xxxv. 7. "If thou be righteous what givest thou him?" but out of the free goodness and bounty of our lawgiver, who is pleased to make himself a debtor to his creatures' obedience, by his free promise of a reward, and annexing of it to the obedience of this law, *Psal.* lxii. 12. Also to thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, for thou renderest to every man according to his works; as if he should have said; "O Lord, all thy creatures owe an universal subjection and obedience to thy command, and when they have done what thou commandest, they pay but the just tribute unto thee for their being; and therefore when they have done all that thou requirest, they must sit down and say, we are unprofitable servants, we have done but what was our duty, and cannot challenge any reward at thy hands. They owe thee more for their being, that thou hast already given them, than all their service and obedience can amount unto. It is thy mercy, not thy justice, that hath annexed any further reward to that duty which we owe unto thee. All the challenge that thy creature can make to any reward of his choicest obedience, is still founded upon thy mercy, who (though we are in all this but unprofitable servants) art pleased to be to us a bountiful master, in giving

that reward to the obedience of thy creature, which only thine own free goodness did at first freely promise. Even so, Lord, because mercy pleaseth thee."

3. In his most wise and special providing for them, disposing of them, and protecting of them. The general providence of God reacheth every creature; but, if that infinite wisdom and power can admit of any degrees in the way of its execution, it is more eminently, at least acted, in his kingdom over his reasonable creatures; *Luke* xii. 7. "Fear not, ye are of more value than many sparrows." *Matt.* vi. 30. Shall he not much more clothe you? And this special dispensation of this kingdom is seen in more especially disposing and ordering of the ways and events of particular men: 2 *Pet.* i. 11, *Prov.* xxiv. 24, Man's goings are of the Lord: how can a man then understand his own way? of societies or companies of men, *Acts* xvii. 26, hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations: in protecting them against the power and malice of evil angels, restraining them from those evils, that their malice and natural power is able and willing to effect, *Job* i. 12.

3. His kingdom over his church: and this in a more special manner is the kingdom of God. And herein we consider:—

1. The king of this kingdom: God by an eternal decree hath appointed his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the king of this kingdom, *Psal.* xxvi. 7. "I have set my king upon my holy hill." *Psal.* cx. 2. "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." And hence it is called frequently the kingdom of Christ; *Colos.* i. 13. "The kingdom of his dear Son." 1 *Pet.* ii. 11. "The everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" and sometime the kingdom of Christ, and of God, *Ephes.* v. 5. The kingdom of Christ in the immediate administration of it, and the kingdom of God, who hath delegated and substituted him unto this administration; angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto him. 1 *Pet.* iii. 22, first the kingdom of Christ, till he shall have judged all men; and then the kingdom of the Father: when he shall deliver up the kingdom to his father, that God may be all in all, 1 *Cor.* xv. 24, 28. And the regal office of Christ over his church principally respecteth these two things: 1. In conquering to himself a people. The whole world was by sin reduced under a subjection to an usurper, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. And this kingdom of his was a kingdom of

darkness, *Colos.* i. 13. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness." And the subjects of this kingdom were a people of darkness: *Ephes.* v. 8. "Ye were sometimes darkness." And by the advantage of this darkness, this prince of darkness governed the world as he pleased; for they knew not whither they went; and by and from this darkness, this prince led them into another continent, or rather condition of his kingdom, a kingdom of sin; and sin, as the viceroy of this prince of darkness, did reign in the world, and had dominion over it, *Rom.* vi. 12, 14, and by sin he led his subjects into another region of his kingdom, into the kingdom of death; sin reigned unto death, *Rom.* v. 21. and then death reigned, *Rom.* v. 14. Now as God was pleased, by a mighty hand, to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, *Deut.* iv. 34. so Christ redeems him a people out of every tongue and kindred, and people and nation, *Rev.* vi. 9. out of the midst of his enemies. He came to destroy the works of the devil, 1 *John* iii. 8. binds this strong man that kept the house, and rescues his prisoners from him.

1. He came a light into the world, and dispelled and scattered that darkness, which was the principal engine whereby the prince of this world did rule, *John* i. 5. "The light shined into darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." And at the very dawning of this light into the world, the prince of darkness falls from heaven like lightning, *Luke* x. 18. And this was that, whereby the prince of this world was judged; that is, all his deceits and methods, and wiles, and abuses of mankind were discovered and detected, *John* xviii. 11. And by this light we are translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of his Son, *Colos.* i. 13. are become partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, *Colos.* i. 12, are become light, and children of the light, *Ephes.* v. 8.

And as he came with light to take away that Egyptian darkness, which overspread the world, *Isa.* ix. 1. So 2, he came with a treasury of merit to expiate the guilt, and a treasury of righteousness to cover the stain, and take away the power of sin; to re-imprint the image of God. that was defaced by sin; to rescue the heart from the love of sin, and consequently from the power of sin; to transmit into the soul new principles, new affections, new wills, *Psal.* cx. 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." As he came with light to rectify the understanding, so he came with righteousness to rectify the will: the

strength of a king rests in the love and will of his people: when Christ conquers the will from the love and submission to sin, he conquers man from the dominion and kingdom of sin.

3. And as thus by light he conquered the kingdom of darkness, and by righteousness the kingdom of sin; so he comes with life also, and conquers us from the kingdom of death. When our Saviour died, he entered into the chambers of death, and conquered this king of terrors; took away the malignity and sting of it by taking away sin, the sting of death; healed these bitter waters by his own passing through them, and by his resurrection triumphed over the power of death for us, by the virtue of that resurrection, delivering our souls from the second death, and our bodies from the first death, and giving us a most infallible assurance of a final victory over death, by an assured and blessed resurrection. Thus death is swallowed up in victory, 1 *Cor.* xv. 54.

2. And as Christ hath purchased him a people by victory, so his regal office is considerable in the government of this people that he hath so acquired. He hath given them a law to live by, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which makes them free from the law of sin and of death, *Rom.* viii. 2. The law of God vindicated from the false glosses, which the corruption of men had in succession of time put upon it; a law sweetened and strengthened and actuated by the love of God wrought in the soul; a law, though of the highest perfection and purity, yet accompanied with the grace and assistance of Christ, to enable us to perform it in some measure; and accompanied with the merits of Christ to pardon, and the righteousness of Christ to cover our defects in our performance of it. He hath given them a new heart: and this law of his written in this heart, he hath given them of his own spirit, a spirit of life to quicken them, and of power to enable them to obey. And because notwithstanding this conquest of Christ of a people to himself, they are still beset with enemies, that would reduce them to their former bondage, he watcheth over them and in them, by his grace, wasting and weakening and resisting their corruptions by new supplies and influences from him; quickening their hearts by renewed derivations of life and spirit from him, which otherwise would sink and die under the weight of their own earth; encountering temptations, that, like fogs and vapours, arise out of our own flesh; or, like storms or snares, raised or placed by the devil against us; either

by diverting them, or by giving sufficient grace to oppose them. These and the like administrations doth our Saviour use, which though they are secret and not easily discerned by us, and though they are ordered without any noise or appearance, yet they are works of greater power and of greater concernment, and of equal reality, with all the visible administrations of things in this world, which are more obvious to our sense, and are the effects of that invisible government of Christ, and of that promise of his, "Behold I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," *Matt.* xxviii. 20. This is that kingdom of God within them, *Luke* xvii. 21, consisting in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, *Rom.* xiv. 17. casting down imaginations, and every high thing, that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, 2 *Cor.* x. 5.

3. As in his government, so his regal office is evidenced in his judgment. And this judgment of his, being one of the acts or administrations of this kingdom, is oftentimes called the kingdom of God. His judgment of absolution and reward to his subjects, and his jugdment of condemnation and destruction to the rebels and enemies of his kingdom.

2. And as we have the consideration of the king of this kingdom, and consequently of his subjects, *Rev.* xv. 3. "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints:" so the various administrations of this kingdom are frequently called the kingdom of God, and the mysteries of the kingdom, *Matt.* xiii. 11, 24, 31, 44, 45, 47. *Matt.* xxiv. 1, 14, &c. And as the adminstrations of this king are often called the kingdom, so are the instruments of this administration.

1. The word, or gospel of the kingdom which must be preached through the whole world, *Matt.* xxiv. 14, and is therefore committed to the ministration of an angel to dispense it to all nations, *Rev.* xiv. 6. That great engine, which though seemingly weak, and dispensed by weak and despicable men, God hath chosen to confound the things that are mighty, 1 *Cor.* i. 27. To pull down strong holds, 2 *Cor.* x. 4. To gather his elect, for the perfecting of the body of Christ, the fulness of him that filleth all in all; and therefore this publication of the gospel is oftentimes called the kingdom of heaven, *Matt.* iii. 2, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," *Luke* x. 9, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you, and if a man consider the mighty and strange effects that this everlasting gospel hath had in the world for these

many hundred years, notwithstanding the many disadvantages upon which it entered, and hath continued in the world, we may well say that it is the "Power of God, and the wisdom of God," 1 *Cor.* i. 24, the rod of his strength sent out of Sion, *Psal.* cx. 2, That the message of a crucified Christ, published by poor despised men to a world that never saw him, or if they did, saw no beauty or comeliness in him, to a world full of prejudices against him, prepossessed with an opinion of their own wisdom, with religions extremely opposite, traduced to them from their ancestors, of which men are naturally tenacious: that this message of Christ, not with a promise of glory or riches in this world, but with a plain prediction of poverty, scorns, persecutions, and death to those that entertain it, and with a promise of future life that they never saw, nor can till they see this no more; should conquer millions of souls to the profession and love of Christ, and to an austere, self-denying, despised life here; doth evidence and convince that there is the strength and wisdom of God that is engaged in this wonderful, yet most positively predicted conquest of the world.

2. The work of the spirit of God, preparing and pre-disposing the heart to the receiving of the gospel of the kingdom; convincing the heart of that sin and that death, which hath overspread the whole race of mankind, and of the truth and efficacy and sufficiency of that redemption which came by Christ, and is published in that word; striving and contending with, and mastering and over-ruling the opposition of the will against it; calming and quieting and rectifying the distempers and disorders and misplacings of our affections; opposing and subduing the lusts of our sensual appetite; enlightening and quickening and cleansing the conscience, and bringing it about to take part with God and the actings of this spirit upon our souls; mingling the word of the gospel, conveyed into the heart, with a secret and powerful energy, whereby it becomes a seed of life in the heart, growing unto eternal life. And thus, as at first the motion of the spirit of God upon the face of the waters, and the powerful word of command produced the several creatures, so by the like motion of the spirit upon the heart, and the powerful call of the word of Christ by the publication of the gospel, is wrought this second creation of the new creature, *Ephes.* v. 14. "Awake thou that sleepest, stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life."

And these two great instruments

produce in the heart two active or operative principles, which, after they are produced, are not only an effect of the work of God, but also become instrumental for the increase of it; viz. Faith and love: Faith, whereby we receive this message of salvation, and entertain it, and rest upon it; and love, whereby out of the apprehension of this great love of God to us, we love him again; we love him because he loved us first. And this love of God engageth the soul to a sincere obedience to the will of God. The misery, from which we are redeemed, is so great; the price by which we are redeemed so invaluable; the glory and blessedness, to which we are redeemed, so full; and all these appearing so to the soul by faith, that the soul can think nothing too much to return to that God, that hath so freely done so much for it. Thus faith worketh by love. And this is that kingdom of God, that is within us, *Luke* xvii. 20. the subjection of the whole soul to the sceptre and rule of Christ. If he command purity of life, forsaking of all things, denying ourselves, crucifying our lusts, laying down our lives, the soul is tutored to that subjection unto the will of Christ, that it cheerfully obeys him in this, and whatever he commands. This is that kingdom of God, *Rom.* xiv. 17 consisting in righteousness, a full conformity of the soul to the will of God, the only and absolute rule of righteousness; peace, upon the sense and belief of reconciliation with God, through him that is our peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, upon the apprehension of the protection and love of Christ, our king, and that glory which he hath most assuredly prepared for all his subjects.

3. We have the degrees of the manifestation of this kingdom, here and hereafter; the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory; both making but one kingdom of God under different degrees of manifestation. God by his word and spirit casts into the soul a seed of life, like that grain of mustard-seed, whereunto the kingdom of heaven is resembled, *Matt.* xiii. 31, 32. And this seed of life abideth in the heart, 1 *John* iii. 9. And there it quickens, and fashions, and moulds the heart to the image of God: it opposeth and struggleth against lusts and temptations, which labour to stifle and to kill this seed of life; and like the leaven that was hid in the three measures of meal, *Matt.* xiii. 33. it doth, by degrees, assimilate the whole inward man to this living principle, and conforms the life unto it. Now though this principle of life is thus operative, yet in respect of the outward view it is a hidden

life. The external appearance of this life is reserved till Christ, who is our life, shall appear; and then shall that hidden life be revealed. *Colos.* iii. 4, "Behold, now we are the sons of God." 1 *John* iii. 2. "But it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when we shall appear, we shall be like him." By this seed of grace, sown in our hearts, we become the sons of God; and of this sonship we have a secret evidence in our own souls; but there shall be a fuller manifestation of it, when Christ, who is our life, shall appear. So then, the kingdom of grace and of glory are the same kingdom, but under a different manifestation: that, a concealed kingdom, a seed in the ground; this the manifestation of that kingdom, a seed in the tree.

To conclude; when thou prayest, "Thy kingdom come," let thy soul enlarge itself in these, or the like desires.

"O Lord, I know thou art king of heaven and earth; and the least of all thy creatures, in their most seemingly casual and inconsiderable events and motions are under thy most certain and powerful providence. Yet such is our blindness, and so mysterious are the ways of thy providence, that sometimes we are at a loss, and desire with thy prophet, *Jer.* xii. 1. to expostulate with thee touching thy judgments. If it stand with thy glory and will, I beseech thee, let all the events and occurrences of the world appear to be under thy administration and government; that all may see thy wisdom and thy power, and thy justice and thy goodness, in all the passages of it; and that all men may be convinced that thou, the Most High, rulest in the kingdoms of men, and that all thy works are truth, and thy ways are judgment, and those that walk in pride thou art able to abase, *Dan.* iv. 32, 37. That they may all acknowledge he is a God that judgeth in the earth, *Psal.* lviii. 11. And because thou hast a more peculiar kingdom, even those that thou hast given unto thy son, let that kingdom of thine come; do thou send out thy spirit and thy word into the world, and subdue the hearts of all people to the belief and obedience of the gospel of Christ, that all the kingdoms of the world may be the kingdoms of God and of Christ. Bring in the Jews, and the fulness of the Gentiles, that there may be one fold and one shepherd; and let thy Son ride on victoriously, conquering and to conquer; and preserve thy flock from the mischiefs that are from without, oppression and persecution; and from those that are from within, divisions and heresies. Let them

walk as becomes the subjects of the prince of peace, purity and truth, in unity, holiness and truth, that they may appear to be the people of thy holiness. Rule every member thereof by thy grace; preserve them from their enemies within them, lusts and defections; from their enemies without them, the incursions of Satan. Make haste to fulfil the number of thine elect; and when thy kingdom of grace is consummate, then let thy kingdom of glory come, the day of the manifestation of thy righteous judgment, when the subjects of thy kingdom shall be delivered from all death and sorrow, and shall inherit that kingdom which thou hast prepared for and from all eternity. And keep all our hearts looking for, and hasting unto thy coming, passing our time here in all holy conversation and godliness, 2. *Pet.* iii. 11. that so, when our Lord cometh, he may find us so doing; and then come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.

Though the will of God be one invisible act, yet in regard of the manifestation of it to us, it comes under a double apprehension: 1. The will of his counsel. 2. The will of his commands. This is that which he wills to be done by his creature: The other is that he wills shall be done upon his creature.

1. The will of his counsel; whereby he hath from all eternity appointed and ordered most wisely, and infallibly, and irresistibly all the acts and events of all his creatures; so that those things that seem to us most naturally or most freely to move, are subservient in all their actings to this most free and eternal counsel of his; and all those occurrences which seem to us most inconsiderable or contingent, are preordained by the same most infallible counsel, and make the instruments of bringing about the greatest concernments in the world, *Isa.* xliii. 14. "I will work, and who shall let it?" *Isa.* xiv. 24. The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, it shall stand. *Isa.* xiv. 27. "For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" *Isa.* lxvi. 9, 10. I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Insomuch that those various, and unstable, and free motions of the will and mind of man, which seem to come under no

rule nor government but of himself are most exactly ordered to the bringing to pass the purposes of God, *Prov.* xix. 21. "There are many devices in the heart of man, nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord that shall stand." *Prov.* xx. 24. "Man's goings are of the Lord, how can a man then understand his own ways," *Jer.* x. 23. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in a man that walketh to direct his steps." And herein we may observe the most deep and unsearchable wisdom, power, and purity of God, that whiles man worketh freely, yet therein God worketh thereby powerfully; and while man worketh sinfully, yet God worketh thereby purely and justly. The freedom of the will of man is not controlled by the infallibility of the counsel of God, nor can it interrupt or disappoint it: and the sinfulness of the will and ways of man is not justified by the infallibility and purity of the counsel of God, nor doth it pollute it. This is admirably set forth in the actings of those two most powerful monarchs; the Assyrian, *Isa.* x. 5, 6, 7. "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger and the staff in their hand is my indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, &c. Howbeit he meaneth not so." The Assyrian king did what he did most freely, most presumptuously and proudly, and arrogantly, attributing his successes to his own power; had no thought of justice to punish the defections of Judah, or vindicating the breach of their covenant with God, but to satisfy his own covetousness and ambition, ver. 13. "For he saith, By the strength of mine hand have I done this, and by my wisdom, &c." Little thinking that the wrath and justice of God was the staff in his hand, the strength of his power. But in all this God doth most wisely and justly manage the distempers of a proud, ambitious, injurious, and covetous king, to the fulfilling of the most wise and just counsels of his own will, without staining any part thereof with the vices of that person, by which they were acted; but punishing those vices in the instrument which were instrumental in the fulfilling of his counsel. Ver. 12. "Wherefore when I have performed my whole will upon Sion, and upon Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks." And as thus in the Assyrian, so after, in the Persian monarch, *Isa.* xlv. 1. "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him." Now this will of God's counsel is for the

most part a secret will till it be fulfilling, *Psal.* lxxvii. 19. "Thy way, O Lord, is in the sea, and thy footsteps are not known." Though sometimes for the vindicating of his own power, and convincing men that he governeth all things according to the counsel of his will, he is pleased to proclaim it in prophecies and predictions the great and undeniable evidences of his external counsel and government, *Isa.* xli. 23. "Shew the things that are to come, that we may know ye are gods." *Isa.* xlviii. 3, 5. *Isa.* xlii. 9. *Isa.* xlv. 21. Who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time, have not I the Lord?

2. The will of his commands. This is the rule of our actions, *Isa.* lix. 21. "My words, which I have put into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seeed," &c. *Deut.* xxx. 14. "The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart that thou mayest do it." *Micah* vi. 9. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? The will of God's counsel is secret, but the will of his command is revealed unto us inthese three great directions of our lives:

1. The word of conscience, the law written in the heart, or natural conscience, *Rom.* ii. 14, 15. So much of his will is by some means of providence discovered even to a natural conscience, as leaves a man unexcusable.

2. The word of the spirit of God speaking either secretly in the heart, or by some occurrence or dispensation of providence, thou shalt hear a voice behind thee, saying, "This is the way, walk in it." *Isa.* xxx. 21.

3. The word of both Testaments. The natural conscience is corrupted, and many times doth not his duty; the word of the spirit of God is not so easily discerned by our fleshy nature, and many times we mistake the voice of our own spirit for the spirit of God: he hath therefore in his infinite wisdom and mercy given us a standing rule, the rule of his written word, obvious to our sense; and whatever other dictates there shall be, we are sure not to err in following it: *Isa.* viii. 20. "To the law and to the testimony: for if they walk not according to that rule, it is because there is no light in them." This is to be light to our steps, and the lanthorn to our feet, *Psal.* cix. 150. 2 *Pet.* i. 19. "a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto we are to take heed as to a light that shineth in a dark place."

In this petition therefore we desire two things: 1. That his will may be done. 2. That it may be done here

as it is done in heaven. 1. In respect of the will of his counsel: what thou hast willed in heaven, let it be done on earth.

1. "Let the will of thy counsel be done." It is true, thy counsels are secret and unknown to me, but they are the counsels of the most wise and just God, and therefore certainly they are most wise and just counsels; and therefore I will be content therein to pray with an implicit faith; for righteous art thou, O Lord, in all thy ways, and holy in all thy works. It is true, thy counsels shall stand, yet are not my prayers impertinent: it is the duty of thy creature to will what thou willest, and to pray thee to do what thou intendest to do; that my will may not only passively submit unto thy will, but actively to run along with it.

2. Let me with all contentedness and cheerfulness resign up my will, and myself, and my desires, unto thy will, and bear a spirit conformable to my Saviour, who, when he deprecated the worst of evils, a bitter and a cursed death, yet he subscribed to thy will contrary to his own: *Matt.* xxvi. 39. "If it be possible let this cup pass from me, yet not as I will, but as thou wilt." I am compassed about with dangers, with diseases, with wants, with reproaches, with persecutions, and I come to thee, from whose hand they come, and to beg the removal of them, and I am sure I am taking the fittest course to have them removed, by sueing to him from whose hand they came; yet thy will be done; I have done my duty in calling upon thy name, but I will not offend thy sovereignty in prescribing unto thy will: Thou art the God that hast made me, and therefore I owe an universal subjection unto thy will: thou art a God of infinite wisdom, and knowest best what is fittest to be done, and when thou art a God of infinite mercy and tenderness and love unto all thy creatures, especially to those that seek unto thee in Christ, and dost with as much love deny some of my requests, as thou grantest others, I will with all patience and cheerfulness wait upon thee, and submit unto thy will, both in what thou inflictest, and in what thou deniest; 1 *Sam.* iii. 18. "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." *Job* i. 21. "The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Thus I will hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord, putting my mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope; *Lam.* iii. 26.

3. Let me, with all expectation and longing desire, wait for the fulfilling of the prophecies and predictions: This part of thy secret counsel

thou hast revealed, that thy truth and wisdom may receive the glory in its accomplishment; and that we thy creatures look after it, and expect it. Thou hast declared that thy everlasting gospel shall be preached to all nations; that the kingdoms of the world shall be the kingdoms of thy Son; that thou wilt bring in the Jews and the fulness of the Gentiles; that thou wilt discover and confound the man of sin; that thou wilt send thy Son in the clouds to judge the world. These and the like parts of thy counsels thou hast published to the world; be thou glorified in the fulfilling of them. Thy secret counsels are deep and mysterious, and when we see them in their fulfillings, yet they make us to wonder and stagger, so that though our duty teach us to acknowledge that thou art righteous, when we plead with thee, yet we are apt with the prophet to expostulate with thee touching thy judgment. *Jer.* xii. 1. As if things fell out besides thy will, and in disappointment of thy counsel. But in these manifestations of thy counsels before they are fulfilled, we see and must conclude, *Dan.* iv, 17, "That the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." Let therefore this will of thy counsels revealed in the prophecies and predictions of thy word be fulfilled, that thou mayest receive the glory of thy power, and of thy wisdom, and of thy truth in the fulfilling of them, and that every man may see and conclude that thou whose name is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth. *Psal.* lxxxiii. 18. And while I thus pray, my prayers are not idle, God having often appointed that prayers shall be the means to fulfil that which he hath certainly promised. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 37. "Yet I will for this be enquired of by the house of Israel."

4. Thou hast another part of thy counsel more precious and of greater concernment to me than the former, which thou hast also revealed, the counsel of thy promises. When thou sentest thy Son out of thine own bosom into the world, thou didst impart unto him this great and concerning part of thy counsel, and this he hath imparted unto us; the promise of pardon of our sins through his blood; of purification through his righteousness; of thy spirit that should lead us into all truth; of his abiding with us unto the end of the world; of conquering and subduing our lusts and temptations; of raising us up at the last day and giving us an everlasting kingdom that cannot be shaken. These promises, as thou hast given to be the objects of our faith,

hope, and certain expectation. *Tit.* ii. 13. 2 *Pet.* iii. 12. so are they the objects of our desires, and consequently the subject of our prayers, and therefore I will pray with David, 1 *Chron.* xvii. 23. "Therefore now, Lord, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servants be established for ever, and do as thou hast said."

And as thus the will of God's counsel is the subject of this petition, so is likewise the will of his command. And this falls under these considerations:

1. "As thou willest in heaven, so let it be done by us on earth;" and to that purpose:

1. Let thy will be discovered and made known unto us, and to all creatures, and in as much as none teacheth like God, let us be all taught of thee, let thy revealed will in thy word come unto us as light into darkness; and because our understandings are blind and sealed up, that they cannot receive this light, and our hearts are perverse and will resist it, send down thy spirit of life and power to open our understandings to receive it, to discern the truth, and purity, and perfection of it; open our hearts to receive in the love of it, and conquer that cell of corruption and oppositions that lie there ready to stifle it; mingle thy word in our hearts with faith, that may purify our hearts, and make thy word powerful to the subduing of all those strongholds and oppositions that stand out against it: thy will in heaven is a perfect, pure, and holy will; send out such discoveries of thy will, that we may know it in the spiritualness and truth of it, vindicated from the false glosses that the corruptions and degenerations of the times, or our deceitful and false hearts, are apt to put upon it: and that "Thy will may be done on earth as it is in heaven," let it be known on earth as it is in heaven.

2. Because the only true principle of obedience is love shed abroad, thy love in our hearts: and, because the sense of thy love to us is the cause and ground of our love to thee, shew us the greatness and fulness of thy love to us in Christ, and that will reflect acts of love to thee again, and make us ready and willing to obey thy will, and exceeding thankful to thee that thou art pleased to accept the sincere, though imperfect obedience of thy creature.

3. And because the end of the manifestation of thy love to mankind in Christ was to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto thyself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, *Tit.* ii. 14. And in as much as our conformity to thy will, as it is our perfection, so it is the great and just tribute that we owe

unto thee for our being, as creatures, and much more for our redemption as redeemed and purchased creatures. Let all our thoughts, words and works be universally subject and obedient to thy will revealed in thy Son, that we may be holy as thou art holy in all manner of conversation: purge our hearts from vain and unprofitable thoughts, from sinful and polluted thoughts, from devilish and atheistical thoughts; and let our thoughts be such as becomes the presence of God, before whom they are naked and legible, such as becomes that heart where Christ is pleased to make his residence, pious, charitable, pure, chaste, clean, sober, humble thoughts; fit to be attendants upon so heavenly a guest: wash my tongue from that fire of hell that is naturally in it: *James* iii. 6, deliver it from blasphemous, atheistical, calumniating, uncharitable, false, vain, and unprofitable words; and let me use my tongue as one whose words are all registered, and that must give an account for every idle word: let my speeches be seasoned with salt, glorifying thy name, edifying others, true, profitable, seasonable, serious, charitable, discreet; for by my words I shall be justified, and by my words I shall be condemned. Deliver me from all sinful, impure, unseemly, unjust actions; in the first life of any action or intention let me bring them to the rule of thy word, to the rule of my conscience, to the rule of thy presence, and impartially measure them thereby, and if they will not abide that examination, or upon that examination want their due conformity, let me reject them without any more reasonings or disputings. In all my actions relating immediately to thy majesty, let them be warrantable, pious, sincere, reverent, humble: in all my actions relating to others, let them be full of justice, charity, free from revenge, disdain, sullenness, measuring out impartially, as in the presence of God, the same measure which I would desire to be done unto myself: in all my actions relating to myself, let there be sobriety, temperance, moderation, seasonableness. And let all this be done out of that only true principle of obedience, love to God, presented unto him upon that only ground of acceptation, Jesus Christ; and seasoned with that acceptable grace of humility. If when I have done all that is enjoined, I am but an unprofitable servant, how unprofitable am I when I infinitely fail of what I am commanded?

And as I pray that the things that thou willest to be done in heaven may be done by us on earth, so I desire that that heavenly will of thine

may be done on earth as thy will is done in heaven by those glorious and pure creatures that always behold thy face, perfectly, universally, speedily, cheerfully, humbly.

1. Perfectly. The angels do clearly discern and know the will of God by a double act: 1. On God's part, a clear emanation or beam of the mind of God shining into their clear intellectual nature, and conveying into them a perfect discovery of the mind and will of God concerning them. 2. On their part, by a clear intuition of God, and beholding his mind and will in him concerning them; the wise God having fitted their natures with such a measure of intuition of him, whereby, though they cannot see all his perfections, yet they are fitted and enabled to see so much as is suitable to their nature, conducible to the fulness of that perfection which they are capable of, and to the performance of that active service which he requires of them. And as thus they perfectly know his will, so their wills are most purely inclined and moved to the obedience of it; there is no mixture of impurity or resistance in their will against the will of God; no mixture of hypocrisy or base self ends: for their pure natures are taken up with a fulness of the love of God, large and comprehensive as their natures, and upon that principle they move in all their acts of obedience, and they clearly see that their highest perfection consists in the most even and unbiassed conformity to the command of God, so the more perfect their obedience is, the more absolute is their perfection; they need no other motive to obey him but this, That it is the most perfect command of the most perfect, and wise, and holy God. And as thus their minds and wills are fashioned and fitted to a most perfect obedience, so they are induced with a power from God exactly commensurate to an exact performance of his will; whether it be in their reflected actions unto God, or whether it be in their instrumental actions unto others. If God command an angel to destroy an host of the Assyrians, he can dispatch one hundred and eighty-five thousand of them in one night: if he command an angel to deliver Daniel out of the lions' den, he can shut the lions' mouth, that they shall be rather his guard than his executioners, *Dan.* vi. 22. If he command an angel to deliver Peter out of the prison, he can make his chains fall off from him, like the tow, when it feeleth the fire, *Acts* xii. 7. When he commands an angel to comfort his Son, though under a pressure and weight more heavy to his soul than the weight of the earth, he can

dart into the tender and vital parts of the soul such comforts and cordials that can enable his humanity to bear that burden, *Luke* xxii. 43. When he commands an angel to attend the resurrection of his Son, he can at the same instant shake terror and amazement and dissolution into the spirits of the soldiers, and comfort and satisfaction into the souls of those that expected his resurrection, and cause that stone, which the Pharisees laid upon the sepulchre, as a seat unto his mortality, to start aside and give way to our Saviour's resurrection, *Luke* xxviii. 34. And little do we know those wonderful services, that these invisible powers do in the world, even for poor and weak men, at the command of their great Lord and sovereign every hour in the day. And now, O Lord, it is true, that thy will is done in heaven by those thy glorious creatures, perfectly and exactly; but I and all thy creatures upon earth have in us a mixture of darkness that we cannot know thy will; and mixture of corruption, that resists the obedience of thy will; and a mixture of impotence that we cannot perform that part of thy will, that we know and desire to obey; so that when we can at any time say with the apostle, "To will is present with me," yet we must with the same apostle say, "That how to perform that which is good, we find not," *Rom.* vii. 18. Therefore I cannot in this house of clay hope to aspire to the full perfection of an angelical obedience, nor to do thy will on earth as it is done in heaven; yet there is an imperfect perfection, which in Christ thou art pleased to accept of, an evangelical, though not an angelical perfection in our obedience; a perfection of integrity and sincerity, free from guile, base ends, or hypocrisy, a heart truly endeavouring to obey the voice of God in his word; and truly sorrowful for his defects and failings in that obedience: thus the heart of David, 1 *Kings*, xv. 3, of Hezekiah, 2 *Kings*, xx. 3, were perfect hearts, the obedience enjoined by David to Solomon, 1 *Chron.*, xxviii. 9. "Serve him with a perfect heart and willing mind;" and this perfection of obedience give unto thy servants, "That thy will may be done on earth, as it is in heaven," sincerely, and singly.

2. Which is a consequent of the former; angelical obedience is an universal obedience; there is not any command of God, not the meanest, but they perform it, *Psal.* ciii. 20. "Bless the Lord ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word." For the same principle of perfect love

to God moves them to a willing obedience to every command, as well as any; and they find as much beauty in their obedience unto the command of God, when sent out to minister for the poor members of the Son of God, *Heb.* i. 14, as when sent upon an employment, for the matter, more glorious. And, O Lord, let thy will be thus done on earth as it is in heaven: let me have respect to all thy commandments, and let no sin be so much mine, so dear, so natural, so suitable to my nature or condition, but that I may forsake it at thy command, and keep myself from my transgression; since it is the same God that equally commands and forbids in all, and the same love to God which is, or should be, the principle and ground of all my obedience, *James* ii. 10. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all." A heart that can observe some commands, and yet dispense with itself in the violation of others, obeys not for love of God, but of himself.

3. Angelic obedience is a willing and cheerful obedience. Which still runs upon the former reason; the principle of their obedience is perfect love of God; and love is an active affection, as strong as death; so that they are glad of any opportunity to return the expressions of that love in a most hearty and willing obedience. Christ, speaking of the angels, saith, they always behold the face of my Father, they watch and are attentive, and with cheerfulness expect every command of God. And thus also 'Let thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' that we may willingly and cheerfully perform thy will; glad that we thy poor creatures have any opportunity to do any service to thee, though thou needest it not, and thankful that thou art pleased to accept of the obedience of thy creature.

4. Consequently, an angelical obedience is speedy, swift, ready. They dispute not the reason of the command, nor delay not the performance of it: like the centurion's servant, he saith to one, Go, and he goeth: *Luke* vii. 8. And Lord, as thus "Thy will is done in heaven, so let it be done on earth:" when thou commandest things that our flesh and blood have much ado to digest, would fain be reasoning against, or at least angry in the observance, give us this grace not to confer with flesh and blood. *Gal.* i. 16. But resolvedly and speedily to obey thy will. When Abraham was called to leave his own country, he obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went,

Heb. xi. 8; when commanded to sacrifice his Son, he rose early in the morning, and goes about this hard employ. *Gen.* xii. 3. Lingerings and reasonings upon the commands of God, as they carry in them a want of duty, so they always bring with them much disadvantage, either wholly intercepting our obedience, or mingling with it much unwillingness and adverseness to it.

5. A heavenly, angelical obedience, though it be full of perfection, yet it is full of humility. They know that they owe an infinite obedience to him, from whom they receive their being; and that their obedience to God is but the payment of that debt they owe to him, and cannot make him a debtor to them: they know that infinite distance between the infinite God and themselves, though glorious yet infinite creatures; and therefore they do not only pay their obedience, as a just tribute to God, without arrogance of merit, but they do it with all the reverence and acknowledgment that is imaginable. Both these we find in the adoration of twenty-four elders, *Rev.* iv. 10, 11, they fall down before him, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power." The distance between God and man is infinite; and though the angels are nearer unto God in perfection of nature than men, yet still the distance between them is infinite: here is the odds, the angels see their distance, and see more of the perfection of God; and the more they see of him, the more they adore and reverence him, and the humbler they are in their services; because they see the greatness of their distance. And if angelical obedience, that is so perfect, shall be mingled with so much reverence, with so much humility, should our services, that are so imperfect, be allayed? O Lord, let thy will be thus also done in earth, as it is in heaven: give us a sense of thy infinite glory and majesty; of that infinite distance between thee and thy creature; that with reverence to thy majesty, and all lowliness in ourselves, we may appear before thee in all we do for thee: give us a sense of that infinite debt of obedience we owe unto thee, for our being, that product of an infinite power and an infinite motion; for our well-beings, our restitution in Christ, without whom our very being would have been our burden: give us a sense of the great imperfections of all our best performances, that need no less a sacrifice than the blood and intercession of Christ to wash them from that

guilt that would damn us, if we had nothing else to answer for: give us a sense of thy great condescension to thy weak and sinful creatures, that are pleased to deliver unto us the knowledge of thy will; and when we by nature are unable to conceive it, or to believe it, dost give us light to understand it, and faith to ascend unto it, that that law is holy, just, and good; and when for all these convictions of thy truth, our hearts, the seats of rebellion, do oppose it in the love and practice of it, thou art pleased to send down a powerful working of thy spirit to chase out of us those oppositions of our corrupted nature, and to make us willing in the day of thy power, and to strive with and subdue our hearts to any measure of the love of thy will; and when notwithstanding all this, our poor and lean performances are mingled with much of our own deadness, contrary motions, and pollutions; yet thou art pleased to sprinkle our obedience with his perfect righteousness; to forgive the defects; to cover the imperfections; to rectify the deformities of all our obedience; to pardon what is ours, our sins and defects, and to accept and reward what is thine own, as if it were ours, when thou workest all our works in us, and yet rewardest us, as if we had wrought them.

And as in the distinct considerations of the will of the counsels and commands of God, we are to desire that his will may be done on earth as it is in heaven, so in the conjunct consideration of both these wills. There is not an action or event in the world, but it falls out by the determinate counsel and fore-appointment of God; and yet to the production of these events we find a mixture of actions, that expressly thwart the command of God. The greatest event, and of the greatest concernment that the world ever knew, or shall know, was the death of Jesus Christ; and though he was thus delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, yet the Jews took, and by wicked hands crucified and slew him, *Acts* ii. 33. The counsel of God was a most wise merciful counsel: the action of the Jews that fulfilled this counsel was a most cruel and unjust action; yet the injustice of the instrument did no way affect the counsel of God, nor the counsel of God no way justify the action of the Jews; witness that heavy curse that upon their own imprecation lies upon the actors and their posterity unto this day, "his blood be upon us, and upon our children," *Matt.* xxvii. 25. The man sins most willingly, and though the wise God intermingle occurrences that make

the sinful actions of men instrumental to his counsels, yet their guilt is no less, and no less their own, by being subservient to his counsel. God hath given thee a word of command, he hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require at thy hands! *Micah* vi. 8. Thou needest not; nor mayest seek out for a rule of thy actions in the secret counsels of God; nor endeavour to justify thy actions, because in order to the fulfilling of those counsels; but keep to that rule which he hath given, "To the law, and to the testimony." *Deut.* xxix. 29. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things that are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever."

"Therefore, O Lord, teach me to wait upon the will of thy counsels, and to be instrumental in them; that I may nevertheless ever obey the will of thy command; that while I act thy will, as a creature, I may never neglect it as a man or a Christian. Thy wisdom, it is true, can bring about thy counsels by the sinful actions of men; and as thou turnest the hearts of men as rivers of waters, so thou turnest the sinful motions of the heart, as a skilful workman can turn the streams of water, so that whilst it moves naturally, it shall bring about ends that are of a higher constitution but surely if thou canst make those works of disobedience serve thy providence much more canst thou use such actions to the fulfilling of thy counsels that are suitable to thy commands; therefore as the will of thy counsels is done in heaven by the angels and blessed spirits, in such a way as is suitable to thy commands, so let thy will be done on earth, that while we serve thy providence, we may nevertheless obey thy will; and while we closely observe what thou requirest, that we may contentedly, patiently, cheerfully, and thankfully submit unto, and receive what thou in thy most wise counsel dispensest.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Our Saviour directs us, *Matt.* vi. 33, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and then promiseth that the things of this life shall be added to us. And according to the method of this doctrine and promise, so is the method of this prayer; first to seek the glory, kingdom, and will of God, and then for those things that are necessary for ourselves. And though he hath promised that they shall be added to us, yet he directs to pray for what he hath thus promised to add. And this is the course of God's will and our duty, that we should beg of God

what he hath certainly promised to give. The promises of God, as they are the warrants of our prayers, so our prayers are required, though not as causes, yet as means of fulfilling his promises. And then a promise is most suitable and fitly performed, when it is sued out by our prayers. When God hath promised to build the ruined places, and plant that which was desolate, and had engaged his own name and truth to perform it, "I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it," *Ezek.* xxxvi. 36, yet requires their prayers to precede the performance of it; "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them;" and that amongst other, upon these considerations.

1. To show our dependence upon him; all creatures, as they are essentially depending upon God in their being and preservation, so according to the measure of their power they testify that dependence *Psal.* civ. 21. "The young lions seek their meat from God." *Psal.* cxlvii. 9. "He giveth the beasts their food, and to the young ravens which cry." *Psal.* cxlv. 15. "The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season." There is a secret and unknown testification, even in the sensible creatures, of their dependence upon God for their livelihood, and much more is required, and that most justly from man: It is an act of mercy and bounty for God to promise and to give; and an act of duty and recognition for man to seek.

2. It brings the soul more to see and to acknowledge and magnify that mercy that is given, when it is first sued out from God by prayer. A blessing obtained upon prayer, carries a more immediate impression of the liberality of God, than when it is given unsought for.

3. It makes a blessing the more acceptable, when obtained; and the more comfortable and contenting in the enjoyment, when a man, together with the mercy he receives, receives also a sense of the mercy and goodness of God coming with it: and as in respect of this concomitance, so it most times falls out, that such blessings so obtained are more suitable, and seasonable, and ample, and useful, than such as come in an ordinary way of providence.

4. It fits a man with a better mind to use them with thankfulness unto God, with sobriety, and yet with cheerfulness; when a man shall consider that this blessing I had from the hands of the Almighty God, derived to me by that means that he hath enjoined, prayer bottomed upon his promise. The disturbance that grows to any man in

any condition is either out of a disproportion of his condition to a right mind or desire, or a disproportion of his mind to a right fruition: a blessing obtained by prayer avoids both; it brings a proportionable good to his mind and desire; and it suits the mind with a proportionable temper to the blessing. *Eccles.* vi. 2. Solomon tells us of a man to whom God had given riches and wealth and honour, so that he wanted nothing that his heart could desire; yet God gave him not power to eat thereof: the discomposure of his mind robbed him of fruition as equally as if he had not had the possession. But the blessing of wealth gotten by prayer, is accompanied with a mind to use it comfortably and cheerfully, yet soberly and humbly. Sin hath put a curse in the creatures, that they prove unuseful; and it hath put a curse in the soul, that it corrupts the creature, as an ill stomach doth good nourishment; so that oftentimes they are occasions of excess and intemperance, of pride and haughtiness, of carnal confidence and forgetting of God; *Prov.* xxx. 9, "lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?" Prayer is by the free goodness of God made a means to take out the curse from both; it sanctifies the creature, 1 *Tim.*, iv. 5. "Every creature of God is sanctified by the word and prayer:" by the word of command given to the creature to make it serviceable; and by the word of promise given to the user; and by prayer laying hold upon that promise, and suing out that blessing that is contained in it; and it sanctifies the heart, keeps it in dependence upon God, in confidence in him, in sobriety before him; it teacheth him that the blessings of this life come from him, are his blessings, my corn and my wine, and my oil, and accordingly the heart is tutored to use them with all moderation, thankfulness and contentedness.

1. Give us, &c. Give us our bread, not pay it us as a duty. The best title we have to all our blessings is free gift. God did not, nor could at first owe to anything its being; and having given a being to anything, he owes it not preservation, nor the means of it; but the gift of the latter is as free as of the former. When God said to man, "In the sweat of thy brows thou shalt eat thy bread," *Gen.* iii. 19, he gave him not his bread as the wages of his labour, but annexed his toil and labour as the curse of his life; and yet such is his mercy that he gives us our bread for asking it. *Matt.* vii. 11. "How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give

good things to them that ask him?" "O Lord, I have no title to the necessaries of my life, but thy free gift and bounty; and had I any, yet my continual sins do every moment forfeit that title. The beggar that begs bread at my door, hath a better right to the bread he begs, as against me, than I have to the bread I eat, as from thee. I come therefore before thee for the necessaries of my life with all abhorrence and detestation of any merit in myself to deserve them: they are thine before thou givest them; and they are not mine unless thou givest them; and when thou hast given them they are still thine, and blessed be thy name that thou art pleased to give them me for the asking. Nor doth my asking of my bread at thy hands deserve the gift of it to me, but it is the means which thou hast sanctified by thy free promise to procure them for me.

2. "Give us our bread." We cannot give it ourselves, our good is not in our own hands nor power; it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, *Deut.* viii. 16, 19, without his blessings my labours and projections will prove fruitless; it is vain to rise early, and to go to bed late, *Psal.* cxxvii. 2, or if they arrive to acquire the bread I want, yet he can blow upon it, and make holes in my bag, *Hagg.* i. 6, 9, can send worms into my manna, *Exod.* xvi. 20, or if my store become not unserviceable for me, yet it must be his blessing that must enable me to eat of it, *Eccles.* v. 19, and vi. 2, I will therefore be honestly industrious to get my bread: for it is my duty, *Gen.* iii. 19. "In the sweat of thy brows thou shalt eat thy bread." But I will not be solicitous touching the event; for "he hath said I will not leave thee nor forsake thee, *Heb.* xiii. 5. And if the providence of God second my endeavours, yet I will not sacrifice to my net, *Hab.* i. 16, but with acknowledgment bless the hand of God that gives me the bread, and labour and pray to make it bread to me; for man cannot live by bread alone, *Matt.* iv. 4, but by that word of blessing whereby he makes it my daily bread.

"Give us our bread, yet if thou give it not, give us contentedness; for what cause have we to murmur at the denial of that which thou art not bound to give? or if thou turn our daily bread to bread of carefulness, or of affliction, yet give us patience, and we shall be able to live upon this bread. Our daily bread is thy free gift, and therefore if thou give it not, it is no injury nor cause of repining.

This Day, or Day by Day.

And why not bread for to-morrow, as well as for to-day? the reason of the prayer is contained in our Saviour's command, *Matt.* vi. 32. "Take no thought for to-morrow." And the reasons of that command are these:—

1. To keep us in a continual dependence upon God. And this our Saviour enforceth upon the consideration of the very fowls, *Matt.* vi. 26. "They sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them;" and that, in due season, *Psal.* cxlv. "And are ye not much better than they?" When Elias was at God's immediate finding, the ravens brought him meat in the wilderness at seasonable times. Supplies beyond necessity of the present age are apt to make us either vainly profuse, or vainly confident. An example of the first we have in the prodigal, *Luke* xv. 12, that would have all his portion at once that belonged to him; he wasted it in riotous living, which he did not before, when his Father's care measured out his supplies according to his exigences and occasions. An instance of the latter we have in the rich man, *Luke* xii. When his store out-grew his receipt, so that he projecteth the building of greater barns, he then sets up his rest; "Thou hast much laid up for many years; eat, drink, and be merry." Israel was in less danger when he fed as it were from hand to mouth in the wilderness, than when he had eaten and was full; when his herds, and flocks, and silver, and gold were multiplied, then his heart was in danger to be lifted up and to forget God, *Deut.* viii. 3, 13, 14. And accordingly it proved when Jesurun waxed fat, he kicked, and forsook the Lord which made him and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation, *Deut.* xxxii. 15. And such is the baseness and falseness and pride of our hearts, that could we have our turns served by any other means than from the hands of God, we would never seek unto him: and when we have anything beyond the exigence of our present condition, we presently make that our confidence. We had rather be beholden to anything than to him, and rather trust in anything than in him. Therefore in great condescension to the waywardness of our natures, he is often pleased to keep the treasury of outward blessings in his own hands, deliver them out by little and little according to our present exigences, that so, though the baseness of our natures will not, yet the necessities of our nature and his wise dispensation enforceth us to

make our often addresses to him to beg our bread of him, as often as we have necessity to eat, that thereby we may learn to depend upon him.

2. Though our foolish hearts cannot think so, yet certain it is, that God is the best treasurer of his own blessings for us. He husbands them better for us than we can ourselves; dispenseth them with more prudence, seasonableness, convenience, than if they were at our taking. He knows what proportion is fittest, what time seasonablest: and therefore we are taught by this part of this petition to trust God with his own blessings, and with the dispensing of them. Our Father is a wise and merciful Father, and we are foolish and inconsiderate children. Let us trust him with our portion, it shall certainly be better managed in his hands than in ours. Though he gives not out to-day what is fit for to-morrow, yet he hath the same store and mercy and wisdom to-morrow that he hath to-day, or had yesterday. And if he gives me enough for this day upon my petition, what need I trouble myself about to-morrow? when to-morrow comes, I will beg it as I did to-day; and I doubt not but he will deal as bountifully to-morrow as he hath done this day. Therefore I will beg to-day for the bread of this day, and beg to-morrow bread for to-morrow, and not anticipate my duty by begging to-day bread for to-morrow.

3. To put us in mind of our mortality. Why shall I be solicitous for to-morrow, when I know not how God will dispose of me before to-morrow comes? Who can tell what a day may bring forth? I will wait therefore all my appointed time till my change cometh, *Job* xiv. 14. and if God spare me my life till to-morrow, it will be then seasonable to beg bread for that life, as I have done for this day.

Our Daily Bread.

Bread. We have herein these two considerations:

1. The extent of it: bread is the staff of life, the strength of life, *Psal.* civ. 15. "Bread which strengtheneth man's heart." If this be wanting, it makes a famine, though there be a supply of other things; and if this be had, the want of other things may be borne: and therefore it comprehends all the conveniences for the support of our natures; *Isa.* lv. 2. "Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread?" *Psal.* cxxxii. 15. "I will abundantly bless her provision, and satisfy her poor with bread." So that when I beg my

daily bread, I beg for all the conveniences for the support of my life.

2. The restriction of it: our Saviour teacheth us to pray for food for our necessity and conveniency, not for our curiosity or superfluity; and, with Agur, to desire food convenient for us, *Prov.* xxxviii. 8. The Israelites had their daily support of bread from heaven, and they were not contented, but tempted God and asked meat for their lusts, *Psal.* lxxviii. 18. "And they were not estranged from their lusts, but while the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God fell upon them." A petition for supplies to be consumed upon our lusts, is with more mercy denied than granted, *James* iv. 3. When we are to ask for temporal supplies, our Saviour teacheth us in this petition, modesty, moderation, and contentation; if we have food and raiment, therewith to be content: not but that abundance is a blessing, and such as wherein God not only allows, but requires a cheerful and thankful use, *Deut.* xxviii. 47. "Because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and gladness of heart for the abundance of all things, therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, &c." Wealth and abundance are blessings of God, such as we must receive with thankfulness, and use with cheerfulness, sobriety, and liberality: but we have no promise to be rich or to have abundance; if God gives it, he is better than his promise, and we have great cause therein to bless his name: but we have a promise of supply of our necessities of nature, and the promise of God is the foundation of our prayer. We have commission to pray for bread, not for delicacies or superfluities. These, if given, may be lawfully and must be thankfully used: but if not given, we must live contentedly and thankfully without them. God knows what proportion best fitteth us, and if he gives us our daily bread, he gives us as much as we have a commission to ask; and yet by asking only for daily bread, we are not bound to ask merely for the necessity of the support of life, but for a comfortable and convenient support, according to that condition wherein God's providence hath placed us. That may be bread to one's meal for his convenience, which may be quails to another's meal for his lusts. And this variety may arise by the difference of stations or degrees, (that may be but bread for Solomon's table, which may be quails for a meaner person): the difference of relations and dependencies, the difference of tempers and constitutions of body, the

difference of seasons and occurrences. There may be a season when our Lord gives us a commission to eat whatsoever our soul desireth, so it be done before the Lord, and as in his presence, *Deut.* xiv. 26. And there is a season when flaying of oxen, and killing sheep, and eating flesh, is an iniquity not to be purged, *Isa.* xxii. 12, 13, 14. The wise God, that ordereth and disposeth all times, and persons, and circumstances, doth with the same wisdom fit them with suitable concomitants and adjuncts. He hath made everything beautiful in its time, *Eccles.* iii. 11.

But besides this bread for our bodies, there is a bread for our souls, which comes under this petition: the bread of life, and the water of life, *John* vi. 33, this is the life of our souls. And as much as the good and support and life of our souls is of more concernment to us than the life of our bodies, so is the bread of our souls of more concernment for us to ask, than the bread of our bodies: this is Christ, *John* vi. 34. "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. Bread, like the widow's barrel of meal, that shall never diminish unto all eternity. This bread our Lord hath been pleased already to give us, Christ and his fulness; and nothing is wanting if we have but a hand to receive it. And this bread we eat when we believe the truth of God concerning him; when we often contemplate upon the mercy of God in giving him; and upon that mighty salvation which in him he hath given us; when we have often recourse unto him for grace and mercy; when we carry unto him all our stock of love, and admiration, and dependence, and recumbence, and resolution of spirit. And here we find bread for our souls in the most comprehensive latitude, accommodate to every condition of the soul: here is bread to feed and to strengthen it, the grace and spirit of Christ; physic to cure and recover it, the satisfaction and merit of Christ; varieties to feast and to refresh it, the promises of God · joy in the believing unspeakable and full of glory; bread that will satisfy, yet never satiate; but the more we feed upon him the greater is our plenty, and the better our stomach.

To conclude then the whole consideration of this petition; when I pray for my daily bread, my soul doth or should run into such thoughts as these; "O Lord, thou didst at first freely give me my being. I could not deserve it when I was not; the same title that I have to my being I have to my preservation, and support of my

being; it is still free gift, and therefore I come to thee for my bread upon no other terms, than as a poor beggar to a most bountiful Lord. And because thou hast commanded me to cast my care upon thee, therefore I seek my bread of thee for this day, which thou hast hitherto lent me. I desire to trust thee with my portion, and it is my happiness that my portion is not in my own hands, but in thine. Give therefore, I pray thee, bread for this day, and when to-morrow comes I will beg bread of thee for to-morrow; and if thou givest me this day supplies beyond the expense of this day, I will use it thankfully, and nevertheless dependingly; for I will renew my petition for my daily bread, still. It is thy blessing that gives my bread power to nourish me. And that which is bread to-day, and sufficient for to-morrow, may without the blessing upon it, like the Israelites' manna, kept beyond thy command, be worms to-morrow; and because thou hast promised, that verily I shall be fed, *Psal.* xxxvii. 3, upon that promise of thine I beg food and clothing convenient for me. If thou givest me no more, or not so much, give me contentedness, and thankfulness; and if thou givest me more, give me thankfulness for it, sobriety in the use of it, and liberality in the dispensing of it. In giving me but enough, I am steward for myself; and in giving me more than enough, I am but a steward of that abundance for others. But above all, ever give me of the bread of life, that whilst my body is fed my soul may not be starved, either for want of that everlasting bread, or for want of an appetite to it.

And forgive us our debts, Matt. vi.

Our sins, Luke xi.

Sins. We are all under the guilt of sin. No man lives and sins not, *Eccles.* vii. 20. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," 1 *John* i. 8. "God made man righteous at first, and gave him a righteous law, and in as much as man owed an infinite subjection to the author of his being, he owed an exact obedience to the law of his maker; yet God was pleased to give him this law, not only as the rule of his obedience, but as a covenant of life and of death; viz., that so long as he and his seed should observe that law, so long they should enjoy blessedness and immortality; and if they should break any part of that law, they should die the death. The first man made a stipulation for himself and his posterity, and this was but just; for he had in himself the race of all mankind; all succeeding generations are but pieces of Adam, who had not,

nor could have their being but from him; and so it was but reasonable and just for him to contract for all his posterity. And as it was just in respect of the person contracting, so it was just in respect of the manner of the contract; the law that was his covenant was a just and righteous law, a law suitable to the endowments and power of his nature; again the blessedness, which by his obedience he was to hold, was not of his own creating nor obtaining; it was the free gift of God, and it is but reasonable that the Lord of this gift might give it in what manner he pleased; and it could not be unjust that the Lord that gave him this blessedness should give it him under what conditions he pleased: but he gave it him under the most reasonable and just conditions, viz. an obedience to a most just and reasonable law, which suited with the ability and perfection of his nature; and therefore when, upon the breach of covenant by man, he withdrew that blessedness from him and his posterity, he did no more than what was most just for him to do. And thus we stand guilty of that sin which our first father committed, and are deprived of that blessedness and life which our first father had; and the privation of that blessedness and immortality is death; *Rom.* v. 12. "By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin;" and verse 19. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." 1 *Cor.* xv. 22. "In Adam all die." And by this sin of Adam all were made sinners, by these two ways:

1. By actual participation of this disobedience; for we were then in him: but that is not all, for upon that reason every man should stand guilty of all the sins committed by any of his progenitors since Adam. which seems not to agree with the profession of Almighty God, *Ezek.* xviii. 20. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father." But the case is not alike; for Adam was created in integrity and perfection, in an ability to perform the law, and so was a fit person to stipulate for his posterity. 2. And as he was a person so qualified, so the covenant was made between God and him, both for him and his posterity; and, 3. as we suffer in the penalty of his disobedience, so we had enjoyed the benefit of his obedience; we had come into the world with the same liberty of will, and integrity, and perfection of nature that he had: but all these are wanting in any other person in the world. 1. A defect of nature is gone over all, that none is fit to stipulate for himself and his posterity: 2. No such contract hath been at any time made between God and any other man.

2. By a necessary consequence;

for God having justly withdrawn from man his blessedness and perfection; and sin having corrupted and imbased his nature, we by propagation from him derive a corrupted, depraved nature, full of impotence, and rebellion, and disorder: *Job* xiv. 4. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" God was pleased to communicate to man a being in the essence of a man; and to communicate unto him a degree of purity, immortality, wisdom, and perfection beyond the compass of his natural subsistence: but this latter was communicated to him under a covenant, which when he broke he lost, and not only lost that, but even stained, and corrupted, imbased that very being, that after he had sinned, he retained. And this is the old man corrupt, according to the deceivable lusts, *Ephes.* iv. 22. A body of death, *Rom.* vii. 24. And this depravation of our nature was followed with the continual corruption, and at last with the dissolution of nature; and that not only in those who had sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, by an actual breach of an express law, *Rom.* v. 14, but in all that were partakers of Adam's corrupted nature, even infants; and so death passed over all.

And thus we partake of original sin, as well by being virtually actors in it, as also by derivation of a corrupted nature; so this corruption of our nature produced in all our lives continued and renewed actual sins, the conceptions of lust, *James* i. 15. And these actual sins, according to the difference of those commands of God, which are violated, are either sins of omission, or of commission; and both come under the extent of this petition, by the name of sins or trespasses, *Luke* xi. by the name of debts, *Matt.* vi. For we owe unto God duty and obedience, and every violation of that duty leaves us so much indebted unto God; the least of which is impossible to be paid when once incurred; because it is impossible for us to make that not to have been, which hath already been, and impossible for us by all our future obedience, (were it as exact as the will of God requires) to expiate a sin past; for still that perfect obedience is no more than we owe: we have therein but done our duty and are but unprofitable servants; but if it were possible to think that one act of perfect obedience to God would expiate for any sin past, yet such is the corruption of our nature, that not one such act can be found: there is in our best actions a mixture and adherence of some defect or other, that makes it become the subject still of this petition, that which needs mercy, pardon, and

therefore cannot contain merit to deserve.

So then all are concluded under sin, *Gal.* iii. 22. and consequently under guilt, the effect of sin; consequently under death and a curse, the wages of sin. And this sin, guilt and curse is so closely bound to every one of Adam's posterity, that there is no possibility in the best of them to deliver themselves from it: therefore, O Lord teach us to pray:

Forgive us.

Forgiveness is an act of free grace whereby our offended God freely, and without any merit of ours, remits the sin, the guilt and punishment; the person offended is he only that can forgive: the rule was true though misapplied, *Mark* ii. 7. "Who can forgive sins but God only?" and forgiveness is an act of most free mercy and nothing of merit in the person forgiven; *Isa.* xliii. 25. "I even I am he, that blotteth out thy trangressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Misery, which is the effect of sin, is the object of mercy, but it is not the desert of it, especially when that very misery, under which we are brought by sin, is a misery wilfully contracted by ourselves, and not only so, but is still a sinning misery, a misery accompanied with stupidity and senselessness, with aversion and opposition against that God and that very mercy that should deliver us. God commends the freeness and fulness of his goodness to us, by taking that season to be merciful, when our condition is most miserable, not because our misery deserves his pity: *Ezek.* xvi. 6. "I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live: Yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live." This forgiveness is thus wrought: man, that was infinitely bound to love and obey the author of his being, most ungratefully and unnecessarily sinned against him, and thereby deservedly incurred the everlasting curse of the most just and true God, and forfeited his being: yet, though man had destroyed himself, Almighty God, of his own free will, and without any other motive, and by his own infinite wisdom, contrived a way whereby his most exact truth and justice might be satisfied, and yet his creature saved, and his mercy and goodness might be infinitely evidenced unto men and angels: By an everlasting covenant between the Father and the Son, the Son he must assume our nature, and offer it up as one sacrifice for sin for ever, *Heb.* x. 12. This was that mystery hid him from ages and generations; the mystery that the angels desire to look into, 1 *Pet.* i.12. The great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, 1 *Tim.* iii.

16. The great end of the creation of man. And by this sacrifice thus freely given by our offended Lord, we have redemption, even the remission of our sins, *Ephes.* i. 7. *Colos.* i. 14. And pardon thus freely given by the Father, and yet thus dearly bought by the Son, is with abundance of love and grace proclaimed and tendered unto all, in all the world, that will but come in, and enter into covenant with God in Christ, *Jer.* xxxi. 34. "I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more." And although this one sacrifice of Christ, offered up once for all as a full satisfaction for all the sins of his elect, to the end of the world, yet the same eternal contract, that made it so, did likewise appoint certain means actually to apply it; and make it effectual to us, of faith to lay hold upon it. And in as much as, notwithstanding our giving up our names to Christ, many renewed daily sins are committed by us, our Lord teacheth us to resort daily to this sacrifice, this magazine of mercy, this fountain opened to wash for sin and for uncleanness, thence to fetch new applications of this one sacrifice of our renewed offence, and to beg our pardon as often as we beg our bread.

So then,

1. We have the true original of forgiveness, the free love of God, which gave Christ as the sacrifice for sin, and accepted that sacrifice as the price of our pardon: "So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," *John* iii. 16.

2. We have the meritorious cause of it, that sacrifice of Christ, whereby pardon is impetrated for as many as lay hold upon it.

3. The act which that eternal counsel appointed to be the means of the actual application of it to the soul, receiving of the pardon thus offered. "To as many as received him, to them &c." *John* i. 12. For as we live and move, and have our being by God, and his will, and providence; yet the same will of his hath appointed the means, whereby that will of his is accomplished, our daily bread, and the use of it; so, although from God we have our pardon, yet the same will of his hath appointed faith in Christ, to be the instrument of an actual or effectual application of it; and the efficacy of faith, as an instrument for that purpose, depends likewise upon the same will of God, which hath so appointed. When the Israelites were bitten with fiery serpents in the wilderness, God commanded Moses to erect a brazen serpent for their cure, *Num.* xxi. 8. But although

the divine will had annexed a power of healing unto that serpent instrumentally, yet the same will appointed the actual application of that power, to looking upon that serpent: "Every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live:" so though, by the eternal will of God, a pardon is obtained by the death of Christ, yet the same will of his hath appointed faith in Christ the means of the receiving of that pardon: and yet this very means is not in our own power, but it is the gift of God: *John* vi. 44. "No man can come unto me, except the Father draw him."

4. The renewed exercise of that act, upon occasions of sin committed or renewed. Prayer for pardon, which as it doth most naturally flow from the sense of sin, and of a pardon impetrated by Christ, so by the divine institution, it is required to apply that pardon actually to the soul: and it is a high mercy of God, to grant it for the asking; and an argument of a proud unbelieving heart, to think to have it without; and whensoever the Spirit and the word of God hath wrought in a man a belief of, and in the sacrifice of Christ, the same spirit doth work in the heart a desire of it; which is nothing else but the prayer of the mind; for it maketh intercession according to the will of God, *Rom.* viii. 27. And herein we therefore see two things:

1. Our duty. Our sins are many, and daily, even after we have given up our names to Christ. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," 1 *John* i. 8. And though meritoriously Christ hath satisfied for those very sins, yet we are to have often recourse to this sacrifice, fetch our cure and our cleansing, in the actual application of this sacrifice unto us. Had a man been bitten by a fiery serpent, he might look upon the brazen serpent and live; and had he been bitten again, he must have looked again, or else he had died: it is so with us, only here is the odds; the man that had been once cured, if bitten again, might perchance not have looked again upon the serpent, and so have died; but it is otherwise here; the same principle of life, that abiding seed, 1 *John* iii. 8. that did at first make him to seek and sue to Christ for his first actual pardon, will after a fall, a renewed sin, send the soul to this fountain for a new act of application of that cleansing and pardoning; he cannot commit sin, that is lie in it, without recourse to God for pardon, because his seed abideth in him, 1 *John* ii. 8.

2. Our privilege. If any man sin, we have an advocate, 1 *John* ii.

1, an advocate that knows the mind of our judge, and out of that knowledge, hath taught us as often as we beg our bread, to beg our pardon, and that with assurance that we shall be heard, if we do it in faith and sincerity; 1 *John* i. 9. "He is faithful and just to forgive." It is the proclamation of his name, *Exod.* xxxiv. 7. "Forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." It is his promise, *Jer.* xxxi. 34. *Jer.* xxxiii. 8. "I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more:" Even to a revolting and backsliding creature, upon true repentance: *Isa.* lvi. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. *Jer.* iii. 12. "Return thou backsliding Israel, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and will not keep anger for ever; only acknowledge thine iniquity." Christ came into the world to restore in man the lost image of God. And when Peter asked him, *Matt.* xviii. 21. "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times seven, but until seventy times seven." And surely that mercy, that Christ required in a poor mortal man, is infinitely fuller in the merciful God, who delights in mercy and forgiveness: only remember,

1. To take heed of presumptuous sins, premeditated sins, sins against knowledge, and against convictions, sins with a presupposition of pardon, *Deut.* xxix. 19. That "shall bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart. The Lord will not spare him." These, though they cannot exceed the mercy of God to pardon them, they many times shut and seal up the soul against pardon, hardening the heart to a great difficulty, if not a final impossibility of repentance; and by that means the soul is disabled, with any comfortable ground or assurance to beg pardon, without the great mercy of God to soften that heart again.

2. Make a frequent and serious examination of thy past actions; measure them by the rule of the word of God; and find out that accursed thing, whatsoever it be, that is displeasing to him; so that, as much as may be, thou mayest distinctly, and with reverence to particular sins, or faults, or failings, pray over this petition. There is not a day, but by a wary observation, thou wilt not only find a general indistinct distemper, which is to be the subject

of this request; but particular, special, eminent evils, that deserve a particular reflection upon them, in the repetition of this petition. "Let us search and try our ways, and turn to the Lord our God." And to this end,

3. Endeavour to keep thy conscience always wakeful, vigilant, tender; be content to listen to her chidings; she seldom quarrels without a cause; but suppressing, checking, and stifling the language of conscience, makes her at last either sullen, or senseless, or outrageous. A vigilant conscience will prevent thee from many sins; but if it do not, it will tell thee of them, and bring thee upon thy knees, and make this petition seasonable, and a pardon gotten thereupon acceptable and comfortable; for how can that man with any sense beg pardon for a sin when he scarce finds himself sensibly guilty of any? This petition is delivered up but carelessly, and coldly, and fruitlessly, by such a person.

4. Give God the honour of his justice, even when thou suest for the benefit of his mercy, in aggravation of thy sins to the due height; in owning damnation and utter rejection, as the just reward of every sin, humble thy soul truly and deeply for it. This will make thy prayer earnest, and thy pardon dear; it gives to God the honour of his justice, and the glory of his mercy, which is all the tribute thou canst pay unto him for his free goodness, in giving thee that pardon, without which thou wert eternally lost.

5. Give thy Mediator the honour and end of thy redemption. Thy Saviour died, it is true, to obtain thy pardon, but wilt thou continue in sin, that grace may abound? sin, that thou mayest be pardoned? and renew thy sins, that God may renew his pardon? God forbid. Thou dost, as much as in thee lieth, disappoint the end of Christ's death, who therefore died, that he might redeem unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Let the begging of thy pardon be ever accompanied with a resolution not to offend again: otherwise God, that sees thy heart, looks upon thy asking of pardon as a higher and more impudent, and presumptuous sin, than that which thou seemest to beg the forgiveness of.

6. Upon the discovery of any particular sin, which in a special manner concerns thee, beware of these things:

1. Sleeping in it, without recourse to God for pardon for it; or slipping over it in thy prayer without a particular animadversion upon it. Be content to open this sore; the longer it is kept covered, the worse it is

Thou must know that every sin is written before God with a point of a diamond; and though thou art contented to forget it, or by incursion of time to wear out the remembrance, or at least the horror, of it; yet it is written, and thou shalt be sure to hear of it, and the longer it continues, the harder thy heart grows; and the deeper doth the canker and stain of that sin work and spread into thy soul; and the more difficultly is thy pardon obtained, and yet the less earnestly sought. It is a secret curse in thy bosom, that makes all thy services to God unacceptable and unsavoury; and who can tell when the decree may come out when this sin will ripen into an eminent judgment? Therefore clear thy account with God betimes; let not the guilt of a sin lie long upon thy conscience, but make thy peace betimes; sue out thy pardon speedily. Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

2. Yet after sin freshly committed, fall not presently to beg thy pardon, till thou hast humbled thy heart, and put it into a fit frame to come into the presence of God; till thou hast got a sense that it is an evil thing and a bitter to depart from him; till thou hast crept to thy Saviour's feet for his blood to wash thee, and for his righteousness to cover thee, and for his mediation to bring thee, otherwise a defiled, polluted creature, into his Father's presence, under his patronage; till thou hast mourned over him, whom thou hast pierced; and been ashamed before him of thy miscarriage; and acted thy faith upon his all-sufficient satisfactions; till thou hast taken up resolutions of future amendment; and then, in the name and mediation of thy Saviour, fall upon thy knees, beg thy pardon.

"As we forgive our debtors," *Luke* xii. For we forgive our debtors.

Here we learn,

1. That it is our duty to forgive others, *Matt.* xviii. 21, 22. Upon their repentance, *Luke* xvii. 4. "If he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him;" and that upon these considerations; 1. From that conformity that is, or should be, in our nature, to the nature of God; he is slow to anger, and of great mercy, *Psal.* cxlv. 8. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy," *Micah* vii. 18. And Christ coming to renew the broken image of God in man, and to renew him after the image of him that created

him, doth enjoin and imprint this part of the divine image, *Luke* vi. 36. "Be ye merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful." And mercy in the heart is that excellent habit from whence forgiveness proceeds. And hence it is, that where the spirit of Christ comes, it assimilates the nature to that disposition, *Gal.* v. 22. "The fruit of the spirit is long-suffering, gentleness, meekness." 2. From that great commandment enjoined by God in the moral law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And much more enforced under the new covenant, even to the love of our very enemies, *Matt.* v. 44. "I say unto you, love your enemies;" and consequently forgive your enemies, for love is that affection that produceth pardon, and this injunction lies upon us under the same obligation whereby we are bound to love our brethren; for the love we owe to God is that grand obligation that binds to whatsoever he commands, *John* xiv. 15. "If ye love me keep my commandments;" thereforefore if ye love me, love and pity, and pardon your enemies. 3. From that great equity and reason, the proportion of God's dealing with us; *Matt.* xviii. 32 "I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst me: shouldest thou not not also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? *Colos.* iii. 13. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as Christ forgave you." If God should require obedience to any command, though I saw no reason for it, yet the love of God would constrain me to reason thus: Though I see no reason of this command, yet when I consider who it is that commands it, even the infinite and merciful God to whom I owe myself and all I hope for, I see reason enough for me to obey, though I see not the reason why God should command. But in this injunction of forgiving my enemy, I see a most just and proportionable reason of my obedience; I owed unto God a most infinite love and obedience to the uttermost possibility of my being; for from him I had it; and when I broke that allegiance, I owed unto him an infinite debt of guilt and punishment; and with this guilt I likewise contracted an innate enmity against that God, to whom I owed so vast a debt of duty and of guilt; this very God freely, without my seeking, when I hated him, sent me his son with a free pardon of all this infinite guilt, and commanded me to show mercy to my offending brother; the offence that I committed was against an infinite obligation of the creature to his Creator; the offence that my brother

commits as against me, is only against some petty relation; we are otherwise both equals. God freely forgave me, when there was nothing to enjoin, or enforce or deserve, or so much as to seek it, and is it not reasonable that I should forgive my brother, that, it may be, seeks my pardon? but if he doth not, our common Lord and Master enjoins it.

2. Consequently upon the former, the not observing of this duty doth most justly and reasonably deserve that I should not be heard in this petition. If I can so boldly and unthankfully encounter a command of God standing upon such just and reasonable grounds, with what face can I expect a pardon from him at my request, when I refuse to pardon my brother at his command?

3. Consequently also the pardon of my brother is no meritorious cause for God to pardon me; the breach of any command is a meritorious cause of punishment; but the observation of one duty cannot deserve the pardon of the violation of another; God requires me to forgive my brother, and when I have done so, I have done but my duty, and do not deserve my pardon; and therefore when I say, forgive me, for I forgave others, I make not the pardon I ask the wages for the pardon I gave; for as my brother's offence against me holds not proportion with my offence against God; so neither doth my pardon of him hold proportion with God's pardon to me.

4. Nor consequently is my pardon of others the measure of that pardon I beg of God; the offences committed by my brother against me are not in truth so much offences committed against me, as against God; for it is therefore an injury to me, because done against that law that he hath interposed between him and me; and so though I am concerned, yet in the foundation of my concernment is that law that God hath set between him and me; and were it possible to suppose no such law, it were impossible to conceive any injury to be done from one man to another. So then my pardon of him is but of slender concernment of my own, the chiefest interest is God's. Again, my offence against God is against an infinite obligation, and against an infinite person; but my brother's offence against me, as it relates to me, is but of finite relation or obligation, and against a finite person; and therefore the measure of the thing forgiven by me is too short and too narrow to fit and suit with that whereof I beg my pardon. Again, my pardon to my brother is with a great deal of corruption,

superciliousness, pride, grudging, averseness, expostulations, secret risings of my heart against him; O! but such a pardon will not serve my turn; I beg a pardon at the hands of the God of mercy and perfection, a full, a perfect pardon. "Measure not out, O Lord, thy pardon to me according to my pardon to my brother; the thing I pardon holds not proportion with the offence which I have committed against thee; his is but a finite offence against me, a finite creature, mine is an infinite offence against an infinite obligation, and against an infinite God; the pardon that I give is mingled with ruggedness, with revenge, with remembrance of the thing I forgive; but the pardon I beg of thee is an abundant pardon, *Isa.* lv. 7. A blotting out, and an everlasting forgetting of my sins, *Isa.* xliii. 25. Such a pardon as leaves not behind it the tincture of my former guilt; that though my sins were as scarlet, they may be as white as snow, *Isa.* i. 18. But,

5. Forgive us, for we forgive. By our union with Christ, we partake of his privilege of being the sons of God: so that as a Father hath tenderness towards his child, and is apt and ready, upon his submission, to pardon him, so there is the same, and a far greater readiness in him to forgive; "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." As soon as he had but a resolution to beg his pardon, God prevents his petition by granting that pardon which he intended to ask. And as by this union with Christ, we partake of his privilege, so we partake of his spirit; and that spirit is a merciful spirit, ready to pardon an enemy even before he ask it. This was the command he gave us, and this was the pattern he left us, "who when he was reviled, reviled not again," 1 *Pet.*, ii. 21, 23, but prayed for those that sought his life, *Luke* xiii. 34. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And therefore this conformity unto the mind of Christ, is an evidence unto a man of his participation of him, and that God heareth him as a Father heareth his child; and by this means faith is strengthened: and the soul argues thus in this petition; "O Lord, I am guilty in myself of many sins, but yet, if I am found in thy Son, thou wilt look upon me with the same tenderness that a Father looks upon his child, and wilt be more ready to forgive me than I can be to ask it; I find thy Son was merciful, and ready to forgive even his enemies; and I thank thy good grace, I find in

myself the same mind that my Saviour bore, a mind ready to forgive the injuries that were offered him; and this disposition I have not from my elf, nor my own spirit, for that spirit lusteth after envy: but surely it comes from that meek and gentle spirit that is in thy Son; and upon this I do believe I am in some measure united to him; and as I do partake of his spirit, so I doubt not but I partake of that relation of his, even the relation of a son unto thee, and in that relation, I come before thee, and beg thee to pardon my sins, assuredly trusting that thou, that hast created in me a mind of mercy and forgiveness unto others, wilt show thyself a God of mercy and pardon unto me.

6. Forgive us, for we forgive; "It is true, our pardon of others deserves not the mercy, nor can it make thee a debtor unto us; but, bountiful Lord, thou hast been pleased in Christ, in whom all thy promises are yea and amen, by thine own free promise, to engage thyself unto thy creature, *Psal.* xviii. 25. "That with the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful." *Matt.* v. 7. That the merciful shall obtain mercy. *Matt.* vi. 14. That if we forgive men their trespasses, thou wilt forgive us: and these promises of thine, freely and undeservedly made by thee, I lay before thee, when I beg my pardon in Jesus Christ, thereby to strengthen my soul, in thy goodness, in the free remission of all my sins.

To conclude, in this petition the soul breathes out such thoughts as these: "O Lord, I confess before thee I am a sinful creature; I have a sinful and polluted nature, a body of sin and death; and this sinful nature sends forth through all my thoughts, words, and actions, foul and filthy streams in every moment of my life; and if thou shouldest pass by all the sins of my nature and life unto this day, and shouldest call me to an account for my errors since I last begged my pardon, there were guilt enough left to press me down to the lowest hell; and this guilt of the least of any of my sins is much more than I am able to expiate; there is no escaping but by thy free pardon, and that pardon I beg of thee in the name and righteousness and promise of thy Son, who knew all thy mind, and taught me to seek my pardon as often as to seek my daily bread. And in confidence only of that free mercy of thine, I beseech thee, pardon me; and as I beg the pardon of my sins in general, so in special I beg the pardon of those sins, which I committed since thy last act of remission granted, and manifested, and ratified unto me: this or that neglect of my duty

to thee or my neighbour; this or that sinful, proud, unclean, vain thought, which hath stained my soul, and grieved thy spirit, and polluted or weakened my conscience; this or that uncharitable, or malicious, or unseemly, or vain word; this or that unjust, or unbecoming, or unchristian, or ungodly action; every one of these leaves a spot in my soul, which nothing but the blood of Christ, and thy free grace, can take away; it leaves a disease, or weakness, a wound in my soul, which nothing but thy free spirit can heal and recover. And though I know that my greatest mercy to others cannot merit mercy from thee, because that mercy is but my duty, and a duty mingled in the performance of it, with many of my own imperfections which stand in need of thy mercy to pardon it, and that little good that is in it, is not my own, but the work of thy grace, as free as thy pardon; yet it is an evidence to me, that thou wilt be merciful unto me, in that thou hast, contrary to my own nature, wrought a merciful temper in my heart to others; the same mind that was in thy Son; and therefore I am humbly confident that thou hast given me that spirit of thy Son, and consequently the relation and privilege of a Son; that, in as much as thou hast given me a heart to pardon others, thou wilt make good thy promise of mercy and pardon unto me. I make mention of my remission of others, not as the merit of thy forgiving of me, but thereby to strengthen my faith, and to lay hold of thy promise made in and by thy Son, that if we forgive men their offences, thou wilt also forgive us. And this I beg, not to make room for new offences, by pardoning the old, not to continue in sin that grace may abound; but with a resolution to forsake my sins, as well as to confess them, and not turn again to folly: strengthen me so with thy grace, that as thou hast now cleansed my soul from my past sins and spots, so I may keep myself from mine iniquity; that I may live more to thy honour; that I may walk with more vigilance; that I may every day find my account less, and thy spirit and grace more and more effectual in me, to conform me to the will and example of thy Son, in all holiness and blamelessness of mind and life: and to that end,

Lead us not into Temptation.

This petition directs us to pray for (1.) Preventing mercy: "Lead us not into temptation. (2.) Delivering mercy: "but deliver us from evil." Keep us from falling into evil: but if we fall into it, deliver us from it.

The former part, wherein is considerable,

1. What is meant by temptation.

2. What to lead into temptation.

Temptation may be understood (1.) for an active solicitation unto evil of sin: this is done either by the devil: thus our Saviour was led by the spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil, *Matt.* iv. 1. And therefore he is often called the tempter; who being a spirit, is, by the advantage of his nature, and by the permission of God, able to mingle himself so with our souls and faculties, that he can immediately solicit unto evil. Thus he mingled himself with the spirit of the prophets of Ahab, and became a lying spirit in their mouths, 1 *Kings*, xxii. 21. Thus he mingled himself with the spirit of Judas, tempting him to betray Christ, *Luke* xxii. 7, with the spirit of Ananias, *Acts* v. 3. "Why hath Satan filled thy heart?" Or it is done by evil men, either by their counsels, persuasions, or examples; or by our own corrupt hearts, *James* i. 14. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed." Our corrupt and sinful flesh breathes and evaporates into our souls those ill and filthy vapours, which infect, and disorder, and seduce it from God; the law of our members bringing us into captivity to the law of sin, *Rom.* vii. 23.

2. For that objective temptation, or the object from whence occasionally temptation ariseth. And thus almost every object of our sense is a temptation, not that there is any proper active motion or action of the object to persuade to sin, but the corruption of our sensual nature, meeting with such an object, acts amiss upon it, and so it becomes a temptation to sin; and especially if the object be such as bears a disproportion to our enjoyment of it; the beauty of the apple was a temptation to Eve; the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment to Achan; Naboth's vineyard to Ahab; Bathsheba to David: yet in these the objects were innocent, and had in themselves no active solicitation to evil, but because they were seemingly good, yet prohibited, corrupted nature laid hold upon that seeming good, and violated the command. This taught the wise man to pray against extremes either of plenty or poverty; because his corrupted nature was ready to turn either into temptation—riches into arrogance and presumption; poverty into blasphemy and murmuring, *Prov.* xxx. 9

3. For that act which is not ordered unto sin, but to some experiment or trial of the temper or disposition that is in a man; a tempta-

tion of trial. Thus God tempted Abraham, when he commanded him to offer up his Son, to prove the sincerity of his love and obedience to God: *Gen.* xxii. 12. "By this I know that thou fearest God." To the like purpose were all those difficult dispensations to the people of Israel at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, that he might humble them, and prove them, and to know what was in their heart, *Deut.* viii. 2. And for this end God often sends several afflictions upon those he truly loves, that their faith may be tried. And these trials are called temptations, 1 *Pet.*, i. 6, 7. "Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith may be found to praise, &c. *James* i. 2. "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trial of your faith worketh patience."

2. What it is to lead into temptation, and how God may be said to lead us into them.

1. As to the latter of these sorts of temptations, they may, and do come from God; viz. trials of grace, by the permitting and inflicting of afflictions. It is a work no way unbecoming his purity and justice; it is ordained to singular ends.

1. To his own glory.

2. To the good of those that he thus tries; thereby teaching them to despise the world; to adhere unto him; to reach out after a better life; to live by faith and not by sense; patiently to submit to his hand, and to wait upon him for deliverance. By this refiner's fire he consumes their dross, their carnal confidence, building tabernacles here, drives them to their true home, and gives them a proportion of eternal comfort and hope, far more valuable than that temporal comfort which they want.

2. As touching temptation unto sin.

1. That God tempteth no man. He that is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, will never solicit any man to that which only he hates: it is the great work of God to withdraw men from sin, and surely he will never draw men into it: *James* i. 13. "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

2. As he doth not actively tempt any man, or move him to evil; so neither doth he infuse into the heart or soul a receptivity of temptation, he doth not excite the heart to close with any temptation, or create or stir up any corruption in the heart to take fire from a temptation.

And yet in some sort he is said to lead into temptation:

1. By withdrawing that grace of

his, whereby we are prevented from, and defended against temptation. We walk in the midst of enemies and snares: the prince of the air hath his instruments, that most vigilantly take all opportunities to draw us into sin, evil angels and evil men; and were there not a devil or his instruments without us to tempt us to evil, we have an old man within us, a fountain, a sea of corruption, a deceitful and wicked heart, a body of sin and death, that can with much advantage, and doth with much ease, draw us into sin; and the merciful God that seeth these snares, which the evil one lays for us in our way, though we see them not, sends out his own grace and spirit, and sometimes removes the snare out of our way, sometimes leads us another way that we miss the snare: he overrules and restrains this raging sea of our own corruptions; and, as our Saviour did to the winds and seas, commands them, peace and be still; he doth by the same spirit strengthen and enable our hearts to resist, and oppose, and subdue those temptations that rise from within, and come from without. And this grace of his he owes not to us; it is merely of his free mercy, *Gen.* xx. 6. "For I withheld thee from sinning against me;" and yet such is his goodness that he seldom withdraws this grace from us, unless we thrust it away and reject it, and then he withdraws that grace of his, and that being withdrawn, that cruel and subtle enemy of our souls falls in upon us, and subdues us; and that sea of corruption within us, that hath now no banks to keep it in, breaks in and overwhelms us. And thus was the heart of Pharaoh hardened by himself, *Exod.* viii. 15. And yet said to be hardened by God, *Exod.* x. 1, by withdrawing from him that grace that should soften it. And this subduction of the grace of God principally respects temptations from ourselves.

2. By permission. The devil and his instruments are under the restraint of the power of God, and without a commission or at least a permission from him, cannot actually execute that evil that is in their natures and wills; he solicits Job, by himself and his instruments, to let go his integrity, but this he cannot do without a permission, *Job.* i. 12. he seduceth Ahab to his destruction; but this he cannot do without a permission, 1 *Kings* xxii. 21. he tempts David to presumption and carnal confidence, 1 *Chron.* xxi. 1. but this he cannot do without a permission: 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 1. he watcheth the opportunity of God's displeasure against Israel, and gets leave thereupon to tempt David to number the

people: and here we may see the infinite wisdom of God in managing that evil, that was in the devil to tempt, and in David's heart to be overcome, to a most just and excellent end; the punishment of the sin of Israel by David's sin. Here was in the same action, malice in the devil, corruption in David, yet nothing but purity and justice in God. He never gives the devil a permission to tempt, that man may thereby sin; but he turns that temptation and that sin into a work either of singular mercy or justice. The devil could not have entered into Judas without a permission; nor Judas have betrayed our Lord without a permission; nor the Jews have delivered him up to judgment without a permission; nor Pilate have judged him without a permission, *John* xix. 11. Here was malice in the devil, and treachery in Judas, and envy in the Jews, and injustice in Pilate, and murder in the soldiers; and yet in God the greatest manifestations of his truth and justice, and wisdom, and purity and mercy, that ever the world did or shall see. While he permits the instrument to sin, he nor his action is in no sort defiled by it, but manageth that sin, which is none of his, to bring forth that righteousness that is only his.

3. He is said to lead into temptation, by the external dispensation of his providence; and that,

1. By withdrawing those external restraints from sin; such are the taking away of good men, good governors, good laws. So much goodness as is in these, is his own; and he may justly call home what is his. As the restraining grace that he lends to a particular man is not due to him, so these external restraints, they are not due to us; but they are the free mercy and favour of God; and yet as in the former, so in this, the removal of them is seldom but upon some eminent sin. When Jerusalem had offended against God, he takes from them the prudent, and the ancient, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and gives them children to be their princes, *Isa.* iii. 2. when his vineyard brings forth wild grapes, he takes away the hedge thereof; *Isa.* v. 5. the good order, and rule, and laws among them. When God is angry with a man, or a people, governors of exemplary goodness are taken away, not only from the evil to come, but by their being taken away, evil succeeds, evil manners, and then evil events.

2. By proposing of objects, which, though they have no evil in them, nor are they propounded to the end to draw men to evil; yet the evil heart of man takes opportunity by

them to act unto evil. The Egyptian enchanters could have no more made blood by their enchantments without a permission, than they could make lice; yet by that act of theirs, Pharaoh's heart was hardened, *Exod.* vii. 22. Again, when upon the importunity of Pharaoh, and the prayer of Moses, the plague of frogs was removed, it was an act of mercy in God, yet when Pharaoh saw there was respite, he hardened his heart, *Exod.* viii. 15. And here appears that sea of poison that is in our heart by nature, that will corrupt an innocent object, as was the wedge of gold; a mercy, as was this to Pharaoh; nay, the very grace, and goodness, and patience, and bounty of God, into a temptation to covetousness, presumption, wantonness.

Now from this petition we learn our duty in reference unto these temptations:

1. In reference to such temptations, which God is pleased oftentimes to send for trial, such as are afflictions and persecutions.

1. That we are not to seek them. Our Saviour teacheth us to pray against all temptations; they are not in themselves good, but are turned to good by the wise and merciful hand of God.

2. That if we fall into them, to be quiet and contented, and to discern the hand that hath led us into them, and the end why he did, and to cooperate to that end: to learn by them patience under the hand of God; confidence in his grace and power to support us; still to hold our integrity; not to be amazed and disordered, as if some strange thing had befallen us, but rest upon that promise of his, who is faithful and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but with the temptation will make a way to escape: 1 *Cor.*, x. 13. Know that it is he, whose will thou hast before prayed may be done, that hath led thee into this temptation. And by this means thy temptation shall be only a temptation of trial, and for thy advantage; not a temptation of seduction.

5. To pray unto God;

1. To prevent us from them; for as they are not to be sought, so all due means are to be used to avoid them.

2. To be delivered out of them.

3. To be supported in them; 1. with patience to bear them: 2. with grace to improve them to God's end; and if God say unto thee, as once he did to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee," it will become an act of heavenly chemistry to turn thy iron into gold, thy temptation into advantage.

2. In reference to temptations

unto sin, we learn two special duties, watchfulness and prayer, both joined together by our Saviour for this purpose, *Matt.* xxvi. 41. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

1. Watch; (1.) That thou be not a tempter: and therein,

1. Beware of tempting God: (for such tempters there have been:) (1.) By presumption and presumptuous casting ourselves upon unnecessary dangers, *Matt.* iv. 6, 7. (2.) by murmuring and discontent, *Exod.* xvii. 2. "Why tempt ye the Lord?" *Deut.* vi. 16. *Psal.* lxxviii. 18. "They tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lusts."

2. Beware of tempting the devil; for such is the villany of our nature, that we are ready even to solicit the devil himself into temptation, by adventuring upon secret and unwarrantable arts, unreasonable practices, going to witches, using charms, invocations, or willingly being in such places where they are used; adventuring into unwarrantable places or companies without any just or reasonable calling thereunto.

3. Beware of tempting others unto any sin, either by thy persuasion, or by thy practice. The former is more gross, the latter well near as dangerous; 1. To the person offending; *Matt.* xviii. 7. "Woe be unto the world because of offences." 2. Unto others, especially when the occasion is given by a person in eminence of place or reputation. Peter's dissimulation proves a compulsion, *Gal.* ii. 14. And this extends not only to things simply evil, but also to the practice of things in themselves indifferent. 1 *Cor.*, viii. 11. *Rom.* xiv. 15. "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." The thing that to thee is indifferent, and so esteemed by thee when it shall draw another into the like practice upon thy example, but against his conscience, becomes an occasion to lose his soul.

4. Beware of tempting thyself; and this may be done divers ways:

1. By giving way to wandering and vain thoughts. They mislead the heart, indispose it for good, corrupt the mind, possess it with vanity; as for example, when a man will raise an imagination to himself, that if he had such a degree of wealth, and then what houses he would build, what retinue he would have, what table he would keep, what equipage he would have; or fancy to himself, that if he had such a degree of power, then how he would revenge such an enemy, how he would honour such a friend, and the like. Such is the vanity of our minds, that it can, and often doth, frame such similitudes to itself, and

upon them beget such follies and vain resolutions as these. The temptation and sin that ariseth out of wealth and power really enjoyed, are those very workings of the mind upon them: viz. confidence, ostentation, pride, revenge, and the like. Now in these imaginations and vain thoughts, the soul tempts itself in a double way: First, he tempts his understanding into a lie and a falsehood, by putting himself into that imaginary condition in which he is not. 2. He tempts himself in his will and affections, drawing from those very imaginations that he hath thus framed, those very same mischiefs, and that very same poison, if not worse, which his corrupted heart would have drawn from the real enjoyment of that very power or wealth, which he hath imagined himself to have; and thereby improveth this very imagination into a real temptation, staining, corrupting, and poisoning his mind, and commits adultery with his own imagination. "O Jerusalem, cleanse thyself: how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?" *Jer.* iv. 14.

2. Idleness. And from this idleness and want of employment the soul runs out either into these vain imaginations, whereof before; or into unprofitable or sinful resolution; and to these the devil joineth himself, and if he finds a man not busied in what he should be, he will help him to busy himself in what he should not be: David was walking carelessly upon his house, sees and lusts, and sins: he therefore that allows himself to idleness, thereby tempts himself to be tempted by himself, or by the devil.

3. Trusting a man's self too much unnecessarily with, or in places, companies, or objects, that carry in them temptations to sin; such as are rude, impious, or wanton company, or conversation: stage plays, filthy or wanton songs, books, pictures; places of idolatrous worship, presence at atheistical, irreligious disputes or discourses, reading books or discourses against the deity, the scriptures, &c. Joseph declined conversation with his adulterous mistress: *Gen.* xxxix. 10. He hearkened not to her to lie by her, or to be with her. And when the wise man dissuaded from the practice of dissolute persons, he forbids to walk in the way with them, *Prov.* i. 15. And not to come nigh the door of her house, *Prov.* v. 8. Not to look upon the wine when it gives its colour in the glass. And a man, that thus trusts himself with objects or companies unnecessarily, tempts himself: and it is a kind of presumption to expect, and rare to find, that he comes off without some disadvantage. He that

hath taught us to pray that we be not led into temptaion, hath given no promise of grace to deliver us from that temptation; which, contrary to our prayer and duty, we seek.

2. As we must watch over ourselves, that we tempt not ourselves or others, so we must watch, that we be not tempted; or if tempted, that we be not overtaken: And for that purpose,

1. Watch over thy ways, and see that the ways thou goest in be warrantable ways. Ways that thou hast a commission of God to walk in, the ways of thy Christian duty, the ways that are commended or allowed by the word of God, the ways of thy lawful profession. If they be such, thou mayest be confident that he that hath given his angels charge over thee, to protect thee in all thy ways, will remove out of this way of thine those snares that the devil lays for thee, or at least will lead thee beside them. It is true, the enemy hath his traps hid as well in our ways as out of our ways, but when we are out of our warrantable ways, the very way wherein we are is a snare, and is likewise all strewed with snares and traps for us: and we have no promise of direction or protection from God in such byways. Therefore consider diligently, Am I in a lawful way? have I a calling or commission from God or his word to walk in this way, or to be about this business? if so, well then, I will trust on him for protection, I am in the great king's highway; but if not, then I am in an enemy's country: I have not the protection or promise of God, I am like to meet with temptations, and to fall under them, I am out of my way; and I know not whither this wandering fire will lead me. And this is the meaning of the wise man, *Prov* iv. 26. "Ponder the way of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established:" That is, consider what way thou art in, and be sure it be a right and sound and warrantable way.

2. Labour to have thy conversation and walking to be with God, in his presence, and keep a constant communion with him: for such is his condescension to his poor creatures, that he is pleased to allow us to walk with him if we will. Enoch walked with God, *Gen.* v. 24. Noah walked with God, *Gen.* vi. 9. God said to Abraham, "Walk before me and be perfect," *Gen.* xvii. 1. "I have set the Lord always before me," *Psal.* xvi. 8. That is, to endeavour to have the whole frame of our conversation as before him, and to have continual communion with him in all the way of our life: and not only at the select and solemn times of prayer, but in the general frame of

our conversation. And if thou hast such a guide, he will be to thy soul, even in the darkest and most difficult and dangerous times, what he was once to his own people, a pillar of fire, that thou mayest see thy way before thee, and he will show thee where the snare lies, and how to avoid it: nay, if thou slip into it, he that leads thee by the hand will pull thee out of it, and will not suffer thy foot to slide.

3. When any action of any considerable or unusual nature is to be undertaken by thee, that is somewhat beyond or beside the ordinary track of thy life, let this have a special and distinct examination, and be not content with that general care of thy ordinary way, but bring it to a more particular scrutiny.

1. Consider how it becomes the presence of God, and whether it will abide to be brought before him without some regret and shame: how if this were the last action of thy life, and presently to be brought into his judgment, whether it would abide that trial.

2. Consider whether it be allowed or condemned by the word of God, or what part, or what circumstance thereof will not abide that examination.

3. Bid thy conscience plainly and truly tell thee what she thinks of it, and of every part of it, and what she likes, and what she dislikes of it.

4. See if there be anything in it that thou wouldest be ashamed to own it before men, or any part of it.

And if upon these examinations thou canst clear the action to be agreeable to the presence and the word of God, the testimony of thy conscience, and darest to expose it to the judgment of men, do it: but if it fails in any, (as when it fails in any, be sure it fails in all, though happily in some particular, according to the different constitution of a man, and the nature of the thing, the exorbitancy will be more apparent, it may be, in one than in another; for all sin flies the presence of God, crosses the word of God, hurts the conscience, and brings shame) reject it, or so much of it as upon this examination will not abide this test; there is a temptation in it.

4. Upon such a discovery of sin in the action to be undertaken, hold not dispute with thy own corrupt heart long about it, but reject it without any more reasonings; for if thou enter into debate with thy heart, she is a sophister and will deceive thee, she will distinguish, and put differences, and enforce the necessary or convenience of the business, the possibility of a greater good which may outweigh the

evil, the inconsiderableness of that crookedness that thou hast discovered, and by degrees at last overwork thee and bring thee about. And the devil is not wanting to be assistant in this dispute, and to impose. When Eve entered into discourse and dispute with the devil and heard his reasons, and argued the case, he over-matched her in her innocence, to offend against a most express and a most penal law: and how much easier will the conquest be over a corrupt and weak soul, when the treacherous flesh is won already without any persuasion?

5. If thy temptation be importunate, lay against it in the other balance these two considerations, and if thou wilt be reasoning with thy temptation, reason thus: "I am now persuaded and solicited to this action, wherein, upon examination, I find apparently a sin against God and my own life; and it is true, I have propounded to me the necessity, or the profit, or the pleasure of it, but I know I am now in the presence of the glorious and eternal God, that hath power to bring me out of this necessity, without the help of this sinful action, and is able to blast this action, that it shall not serve to accommodate this necessity; before that God who is Lord of all the wealth in the world, and hath promised that he will not leave me nor forsake me; I am before that God that hath promised eternal pleasures for evermore to those that fear him, and can mingle or follow this pleasure that I expect from this temptation with a most bitter curse, even unto all eternity; and it is this God that hath forbidden me to commit this sin, and doth stand to see whether I will abide by his command, or side with his enemy; I am before my Lord Jesus, that laid down his life for me, became a curse to redeem me, as well from my subjection to sin for the time to come, as from the guilt of sin for the time past; and that Jesus stands and beholds whether I now value or despise that blood of the covenant, and is accordingly ready with vengeance or glory to reward me; I am before those glorious and pure spirits, the elect angels, whom God hath hitherto appointed as ministers for my preservation, that see and observe whether I hold a conformity with the purity of their natures, or whether I will foul myself in this filth, and partake with their enemy the prince of this world. Could the eyes of my sense behold the least of that glory that behold me, it would make me ashamed of my purest actions; and though I see it not, I am certain it sees me. With what face can I then commit this villany

in the presence of that God, to whom I and all the world owe our being? before the face of that Saviour, who hath laid down his life to rescue and redeem mine? before those angels, who at the command of God are pleased to be ministering spirits for my preservation? How shall I grieve that spirit, whom I hear at this very instant whisper unto me, Do not that abominable thing which I hate? and what will the end of this be? will it not be a stain to my soul, and bitterness in the end? what can this temptation promise me that it can perform? or if it can perform what it promiseth, and promise what it will, can it promise that to me which can be equivalent to the loss of the favour and presence of the eternal God? the loss and ruin of my immortal soul? can it countervail the shame and damage that will ensue upon a contempt committed to the majesty and mercy of the eternal God, before whose immediate view I am now basely and contemptuously, at the solicitation of his and mine enemy, going about to commit this evil? Again,

2. Let me but consider, that with the same measure of shame that I shall submit to this temptation, with the same measure of comfort and glory shall I resist it. When I consider, that in the view and presence of the glorious God, of my merciful and tender Saviour, of the pure and blessed spirits, those glorious courtiers of heaven, I shall give a testimony of my love to God, I shall resist and reject the solicitations of the enemy of heaven, and hold fast mine integrity. Could Job have but heard that approbation which God gave of it after the devil had practised his experiments, *Job* ii. 3, that he still holdeth fast his integrity, though thou movest me against him, it would have abundantly satisfied him for all his losses, and abundantly strengthened his heart against all future temptations. And what we read of we may be sure is true concerning ourselves; the same practices by the devil to seduce us, and the same attestation given by the eternal God, if we resist his temptations. But which is more than this, the eternal God, as he stands by to see my behaviour, so he stands by me to supply me with strength, if I seek to him for it, and with an immortal crown to reward me in that victory over my temptation, which his own strength hath given me. I will therefore lay in the balance against the pleasure or profit of my temptation, the shame and the punishment from that God that beholds me; and against my loss in the resisting it, the glory and advantage in the presence of

God, that I shall obtain in overcoming it.

6. Carry with thee a jealous and watchful eye over thyself in all conditions and actions. For there is a snare and a temptation in every thing thou dost, or that doth befal thee.

1. Take heed to thy senses and their objects: Thou hast an evil eye, a covetous eye, a wanton and adulterous eye, an envious eye, an unsatiable eye; thou hast an itching ear, or an ear open to vanity, dull of hearing, when that thou hearest is profitable; thou hast a saucy and a luxurious palate, that if it find not a snare in thy table, or a serpent in thy cup, will easily make it.

2. Take heed to thy understanding, it is apt to ravel out itself in impertinent and unprofitable, if not dangerous and presumptuous speculations, to mispend itself and thy precious time in that which hurts thee, or at least doth thee no good; and of what use will the most of them be within one moment after death? Either they shall be known exactly within a minute's study, or they will be unuseful, and utterly unserviceable to thee; whereas every minute's time thou spendest here in improving thy knowledge of God and his word, is sowing of a seed, that shall in thy immortal soul yield a harvest suitable to her condition.

3. Take heed to thy memory, it is apt to receive the figures and impressions of vain or sinful words or actions; and the devil is apt to turn that side of the glass to thy soul, that contains those characters, especially at such times, when it may divert thee from, or disturb thee in better thoughts or employments.

4. Take heed to thy heart, it is a deceitful heart, a treacherous and a false heart, that will side with the enemy of thy God, and of thy soul, and of thy peace; an hypocritical and a false heart, that will turn into a thousand shapes, so that thou canst not know what it is. It is the fountain of all those bitter waters that stream through the faculties and actions; a box full of the spirits of poison which will infect all thou dost, and overspread the world with villainy and furies; a foul, impure, impostumated principle, that nothing can cure or change, but the great Lord of the world, the God of the spirits of all flesh; and yet when God is pleased to set up his rule and sceptre there, there is never a minute, but this heart of thine is practising rebellion or treachery or apostacy against it; therefore "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of thy life," *Prov.* iv. 23, The objects upon which thy heart fixeth, though they are innocent and harmless for the most part, yet the ill constitution of thy heart

turns them to the poison of thy soul. Riches, and power, and honour, and creatures are in themselves good; but it is the heart that turns them into temptations, and into sins. In the pursuit of them it begets covetousness, ambition, unlawful means. In the fruition of them, it begets pride and insolence and carnal confidence. In the want of them it begets murmuring, and discontent and envy: In the use of things lawful, it begets excess and immoderation and unseasonableness: In the performance of things commendable and commanded, it begets arrogance, self-attribution, vain glory, overprizing of them and of itself for them, opinion of merit, supposition of privilege to offend in other things, because of the due performance of these. And thus we cannot want a temptation, so long as we carry about us a heart so full of corruption; therefore carry a strict and diligent hand over thy heart; for it hath in it a fountain, a seed, a stock of temptations.

5. Set a watch over all the actions of thy life of what kind soever: 1. In matters indifferent, or that are so represented to thee: suspect thy judgment in them, and know that thou art apt to judge partially, and to put a face of indifferency upon things that it may be are evil; and therefore rather be content to deny thyself the use of things indifferent, than to hazard thyself upon that which may prove a sin. If thy carnal heart judge a thing indifferent, it is ten to one but that thing hath somewhat of sin in it: if thy heart dare only say it is indifferent and may be done, thou mayest certainly conclude that it may certainly be let alone: In matters presented to thee as indifferent to be done or not to be done, be content to refuse that part which thy sinful heart most inclines thee to. When thou deniest thyself in that which thou art sure is sinful, it is the duty of thy obedience: when thou deniest thyself in that which seems indifferent, it is the duty of thy watchfulness. 2. In matters that are certainly lawful; yet take heed of any mixture of any unlawful circumstance: for that makes thy very lawful action a snare to thee, to draw thee into sin. Any one defect is enough to make the whole action sinful: as in the use of the creatures, if it be accompanied with the circumstances of immoderation, unseasonableness or unsuitableness: in the acquiring of conveniences for life, if it be accompanied with any unlawful means, anxiety, robbing God of the heart, unseasonable robbing God of his time: these make the things that are in themselves lawful to become sins. And not only is it so in case

of things lawful, but in case of things necessary and commendable: to glorify God is our most universal and indispensable duty, yet to talk deceitfully for him, becomes a sin; *Job* xiii. 7. To offer sacrifice was a duty enjoined under the old law, yet to commit robbery for burnt-offerings, or to offer sacrifice with hands full of blood, turns the sacrifice into an abomination, *Isa.* i. 13. To pray, to give alms, to fast, are duties enjoined by God; but to do them for pride, or vain glory, turns them into a sin, *Matt.* vi. 1. The mixing of an ill means, or an ill end, spoils the whole service.

6. Especially have an eye to that temptation that is most suitable to thy age, complexion, constitution, or condition; for that is thy most dangerous temptation, because it hath the greatest power over thee. The temptations of youth are commonly lightness, pride of apparel, rashness, lust, excess: the temptations of riper age are commonly vain glory, ambition, revenge, violence: the temptations of old age, covetousness, morosity, &c. So the temptations incident to the several constitutions or complexions, anger, lust, immoderate eating, sluggishness, unquietness, fearfulness, vanity of thoughts, &c. So the temptations incident to the several conditions of a man, those that border upon his trade or profession, lying, cozening, &c. Upon his estate in this world; poverty is apt to incline to murmuring, repining, envy at others that seem of less merit yet more wealth, use of unlawful means either to supply or to cover our wants: power and greatness are apt to tempt to revenge of past injuries or present neglects, to scorn and despise others, to pride and arrogance, to love to be flattered and hunt for applause, boasting, threatening, superciliousness, forgetting of relations, using undue means to support it, &c. Wealth is apt to tempt to confidence in it, to set up our rest here, to be loth to think of death or change, to forget God, to undervalue, or not to think upon, our everlasting future condition, vexing and tormenting cares, an imagination that we are out of the need or reach of the divine providence: 1 *Tim.* vi. 9. "Those that will be rich fall into many temptations." Pleasures expected or enjoyed are apt to thrust out of the heart the thought of the presence of God, and the thought of death and judgment, that so they may be the more freely and uncontrollably enjoyed; they are apt to estrange a man from access to God or confidence in him, &c. These and the like temptations, every man may find by a small observation of him-

self, and others, are apt to follow the several conditions of men, and prevail upon them: and therefore, especially upon any great change of our condition foreseen, we are to fence ourselves strongest against those temptations, which are indeed nothing else but the issues and the productions of the heart upon such conjunctions, and are as natural to it in that state of corruption, wherein she is, as vermin are to be produced from heat and putrefaction; and therefore expect such temptations upon any great change of thy condition, and fortify thyself against them with resolution, with watchfulness, with often thoughts of thy mortality, with remembrance of the presence, power, and all-sufficiency of God; and lastly, with recourse to God by prayer, against them; for "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen wake but in vain," *Psal.* cxxvii. 1.

2. The second means is that which our Saviour teacheth us in this petition, prayer unto God the Father, who is faithful and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, 1 *Cor.* x. 13. "Through our Lord Jesus Christ," who hath suffered himself being tempted, and therefore is able to succour those that are tempted *Heb.* ii. 18. "By the eternal spirit;" who hath promised to guide us into all truth, *John* xvi. 13. That the almighty and eternal God, who so far condescends unto us as to offer us his hand to lead us, and his strength to support us, that sees all our ways, and our wanderings, and the snares that are spread for our feet, would be pleased to guide us by his hand and by his eye, that we may keep the true and old way; and if any snares be laid there for us by the enemy of our peace, that he would either remove or break the snare, or lead us about by them, or lift us over them: that he would be pleased to cleanse our hearts from our corruptions, the nursery of our temptations; that he would prepare us, and instruct, and strengthen us by his mighty spirit to discern, and to oppose, and to overcome the deceits and seductions of our own hearts.

To conclude therefore this part of this petition: "O Lord God Almighty, that beholdest all my ways, I find that I walk in the midst of snares and temptations; the great enemy of my salvation, and his retinue is continually about me, and watch for my halting, secretly and undiscoverably soliciting my soul to sin against thee, almost in every occurrence of my life, and every motion of my mind; and having in any thing prevailed against me, either he quiets my soul in my sin, or disorders my soul for it, and

by both prevents or diverts me from coming to thee to seek my pardon, as a thing not necessary to be asked, or impossible to be gained: again, men among whom I live, scatter their temptations for me, by persuasions to sin, by evil examples, by success in sinful practices; and if there were no devil or man to tempt me, yet I find in myself an everlasting seed of temptations, a stock of corruptions that forms all I am, and all I have or do, even thy very mercies into temptations. When I consider thy patience and goodness to me, I am tempted to presumption, to supineness, to an opinion of my own worth; when I consider or find thy justice, I am tempted to murmuring, to despair, to think the most sovereign Lord a hard master. In my understanding, I am tempted to secret argumentation, to atheism, to infidelity, to dispute thy truth, to curiosity, to impertinent or forbidden inquiries. If I have learning, it makes me proud, apt to despise the purity and simplicity of thy truth, to contend for mastery, not for truth, to use my wit to reason myself or others into errors or sins, to spend my time in those discoveries, that do not countervail the expense, nor are of any value or use to my soul after death. In my will I find much averseness to what is good, a ready motion to everything that is evil, or at least an uncertain fluctuation between both: in all my thoughts I find abundance of vanity; when employed to any thoughts of most concernment to my soul, full of inconsistency, unfixed, unsettled, easily interrupted, mingled with gross apprehensions. When I look into my conscience, I find her easily bribed, and brought over to the wrong party, allayed with self-love, if not wholly silent, unprofitable and dead. In my affections I find continued disorder, easily misplaced, and more easily overacted beyond the bounds of moderation, reason, and wisdom, much more of christianity and thy fear. In my sensual appetite I find a continual fog and vapour rising from it, disordering my soul in all I am about, with unseasonable, importunate, and foul exhalations, that darken and pollute it, that divert and disturb it in all that is good, that continually solicit it to all sensual evils, unto all immoderation and excess. In my senses I have an eye full of wantonness, full of covetousness, full of haughtiness; an ear full of itching after novelties, impertinences, vanities, a palate full of intemperance, studious for curiosities; a hand full of violence, when it is in my power; a tongue full of unnecessary vain words, apt to slander, to whisper, full of vain-glory

and self-flattery. If thou givest me a healthy strong body, I am ready to be proud of it, apt to think myself out of the reach of sickness or death; it keeps me from thinking of my latter end, or providing for it; I am ready to use that strength to the service of sin, with better advantage, more excess, and less remorse. If thou visitest me with sickness, I am surprised with peevishness, impatience, with solicitous care touching my estate, and posterity, and recovery; and my thoughts concerning thee less frequent, less profitable than before, though my necessity be greater. If thou givest me plenty, I am apt to be proud, insolent, confident in my wealth, reckoning upon it as my treasure, think every thought lost that is not employed upon it, or in order to increase it, loth to think of death or judgment. If thou visitest me with poverty I am apt to murmur, to count the rich happy, to cast off thy service as unprofitable, to look upon my everlasting hopes as things at a distance, imaginary comforts under real wants. If thou givest me reputation and esteem in the world, I am apt to make use of it to bear me out at a pinch in some unlawful action, to use it to mislead others, to use any base shift to support it. If thou cast me into reproach and ignominy, my heart is apt to swell against the means, to study revenge, and to die with my reputation, though it may causelessly be lost, and to have the thoughts and remembrance of it to interfere and grate upon my soul, even in my immediate service to thee: any cross sours my blessings, and carries my heart so violently into discontent, for, it may be a single affliction, which I deservedly suffer, that I forget to be thankful for a multitude of other mercies, which I undeservedly enjoy. If I am about a good duty, I find my heart tempted to perform them carelessly, formally, negligently, hypocritically, vain-gloriously, for false or by-ends; and when I have done them, my heart is puffed up with pride, opinion of merit, looking upon my Maker as my debtor for the duty I owe him; and yet but slightly and defectively performed to him; how then can I expect power from myself to resist a temptation without, when I find so much treachery within me? I therefore beseech thee, most merciful and powerful Father, to send into my heart the grace and strength of thy blessed spirit to resist and overcome all my temptations, to cleanse and purge this foul heart of mine, and of this brood and nest of lust and corruptions that are within it; to strengthen myself against the temptations of hell, the world and

myself; to lead me in safe paths; to discover and admonish me hourly of all the dangers that are in my way; and so by thy mighty and over-ruling providence to guide me that I may avoid all occasions of falling; so to order, and over-rule, and moderate, and temper all the occurrences of my life, that they may be suitable to that grace thou givest me, to bear them without offending thee; and if thou at any time suffer me to take a fall, yet deliver me from presumptuous sins, give me a heart speedily to fly to thee for strength to restore me, for mercy to pardon me. If thou sufferest me to fall into temptation, yet I beseech thee deliver me from the evil.

But deliver us from evil. Three evils are here meant.

1. The evil of sin. We are before taught to pray for pardoning mercy in the first petition; for preventing mercy in the former part of this petition; and here we are taught to pray for delivering, restoring mercy. When a sin is committed, there is not only a guilt contracted, which stands in need of mercy to pardon it, but the soul receives a wound that weakens it, and stands in need of a divine strength to restore it; and without this it would never rise out of that state of impotency, yea, of rebellion into which it is fallen, but would multiply sin upon sin to all eternity. As before our conversion unto God we are dead in trespasses and sins, and cannot convert ourselves; so after we are converted, any one sin puts us, as in ourselves and respect of our own strength, into the same state of dead men, in which our conversion at first found us; only here is the odds, God is pleased to put into us a seed of life, that shall again quicken us though we fall: 1 *John* iii. 9. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, (that is, continue in it) for his seed abideth in him." 1 *John* ii. 1. If any man sin we have an advocate, &c. That seed of life, that advocate of our peace, will cause him to lay hold again upon the strength, and mercy and promise of God; will carry his eye to look upon this brazen serpent; will enable him to re-apply the merits and life of Christ to his soul; and so that wound that was in itself mortal, is cured, and the soul enabled to return again to God, whom by sin it hath forsaken; and yet though the benefit is ours, the deliverance is God's, and he will be sought unto, as well for strength to recover from the state of sin, as for mercy to recover from the guilt of sin after every fall.

2. Deliver us from the evil of punishment or affliction; 1. By giving us patience to bear it, as from the hand of God; 2. Wisdom and

understanding to discern and perceive what the end of God is in sending it; for the rod hath his voice and his message; it may be it is to bring into remembrance some sin past unrepented of, which lies rankling in thy conscience, though thou hast forgotten it, and so it bids thee look backward: it may be it is to prevent thee from some sin, which thou art otherwise like to fall into, and so bids thee look forward: it may be thy heart begins to settle upon her lees, to fix herself upon the world, to grow secure and careless, to grow proud and wanton, and so it bids thee look within thee; it may be God is pleased to use this cross to stir thee up to dependence upon him, to seek him by prayer, to discover his power and mercy in delivering thee in some eminent way, and so it bids thee look above thee. Learn therefore the message of the cross, and improve it to that end for which he sent it, and by this means thou shalt be delivered from the evil of the evil.
3. Deliver us from evil, that is, from the very incumbency of the evil upon us. And this is a thing that we may lawfully ask, so it be with submission to the will of God, who best knows what is fit for us; only of this we may be sure, that though the thing be not granted, yet thy petition is not lost: when Paul besought God thrice against an affliction, 2 *Cor.* xii. 9. though he had not deliverance from it, yet he had sufficient grace given him to bear it; when our blessed Lord besought that that cup might pass from him, though he must drink of the cup, yet he was heard in the thing which he feared, *Heb.* v. 7. And thy prayer for deliverance shall be answered either with a way to escape it, or with strength comfortably to bear it, 1 *Cor.* x. 13.

3. Deliver us from evil, that is, the evil one, who goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, the prince of darkness, the prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air; an invisible prince, that, could he but get commission from the great Lord of heaven and earth, would sift us as wheat, would shake our faith, and bring us under his own rule; a creature, but yet of that power, wisdom, subtlety, and malice, that he would be easily able to seduce, or at least to disorder and shatter the strongest man; as once he did Job: therefore we have cause to pray, that as the Son of God came to destroy the works of Satan, to judge this prince of this world, to bruise his head; so he would continually assist us with his grace to resist him, to discover him, even when he transforms himself into an angel of light; that if he shall go about to seduce us from

the truth by signs and wonders, as once he did Pharaoh: by predictions, as sometimes he did in the heathen oracles; by misapplications even of the very word of truth, as he endeavoured to do by our Saviour; by successes and events of things; that we may remember the caution that Moses gave unto the Israelites; *Deut.* xiii. 3. "The Lord your God proveth you whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul;" that if he go about to seduce us into sin, or denying of the truth by proposals and promises of honours, preferments, temporal advantages, or to affright us from the truth by menaces, persecutions, disgraces, death, yet we may not be allured or affrighted into sin, but may keep close to the sure truth of God revealed in his word, whatever the event be.

For thine is the Kingdom, Power, and Glory.

In the beginning of this prayer, our Saviour teacheth us to strengthen our faith in the mercy of God, by teaching us to call him Father, and in the power of God by teaching us to call him our heavenly Father; that under both these considerations we may look upon Almighty God in the entrance into our prayers: and because our thoughts are easily taken off from these considerations; and, like Moses' arm, our faith soon declines, and our light soon burns out; and because there is an equal necessity of intention of spirit, as well in our last request as in our first, our Saviour teacheth us to remind those considerations, that may support and fortify our souls in the close of our prayers, as well as in the beginning; that so the consideration of Almighty God, his power and goodness, who is the beginning and the end, the first and the last, may be also the beginning and the end, as of our prayers, so of all our services.

"Thine is the kingdom." Thou art the only, and absolute, and rightful Sovereign of all thy creatures; and to thee do all the creatures in the world owe an infinite subjection; for by thy power and goodness they were created and are preserved: and yet if it were possible that infinitude could admit of degrees, the children of men owe a more infinite subjection unto thee, than any of the rest of thy creatures; for thou yet sparest unto them that being, that by sin they have forfeited unto thee: and yet more than this, those whom thou hast redeemed by the passion of thy Son, and sanctified, owe thee yet a more infinite debt of subjection, than the rest of the children of men: and because thou art our king, whither should we go to make our requests but unto our king, in whom all authority is justly placed?

And if thou art our king, it is but reasonable for me to desire, That thy name may be glorified; that all the subjects of thy kingdom, according to their several conditions, may magnify and glorify the name of their king; that thy kingdom may come with evidence and demonstration of itself; and that all thy creatures, as they owe a just subjection to thee, so they may duly perform it; that those that have rebelled against thee may return, and be brought into subjection to thee; that though other lords have had an usurped dominion over us, yet that thy kingdom may break in pieces all usurpations, and recover thy revolted subjects unto their just allegiance. That thy will, the only rightful law and rule of justice, may be done in all places of thy dominion, in earth and heaven; and that all thy creatures may submit freely to this thy will, which is the only rule and measure both of their perfection and obedience: the wills of earthly kings are subject to error, oppression and injustice, and therefore thy providence hath regulated their administrations by laws and rules; but thy will is the only rule, exemplar, and foundation of justice; therefore let thy will be done. That thou wouldest give us our daily bread. When the seven years of plenty had filled Pharaoh's storehouses, and were after entertained with seven years of famine, the Egyptians cried unto their king for bread, *Gen.* xli. 55. And whither should we go for bread for our bodies, but to our king, who is Lord of all the store of the world, and gives meat to all his creatures in their season, and feeds the young ravens when they cry? And whither should we go for bread for our souls, but to thee our King, who has intrusted this bread of life under the hands of our Joseph, our Saviour? That thou wouldest forgive us our sins; for our sins are so many treasons against thy majesty, and thou alone canst remit, against whom alone we can offend; the pardoning of sins, as it is thy peculiar prerogative, (for who can forgive sins, save God only?) so it is thy property, a part of thy name, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, *Exod.* xxxiv. 7. That thou wouldest deliver us from temptation, the cause of sin; and from evil, the fruit of sin; from the incursions of that rebel against thy majesty, the prince of darkness; for whither should the subjects fly for protection, but to their king? and though that prince hath a kingdom too, yet is is *regnum sub graviore regno:* the very kingdom of hell is subject to thy authority; and therefore as thou art our king, we beseech thee, protect and deliver us.

"And the power." There may be a lawful and a just authority, where yet there wants power to act it: but as thou hast a just sovereignty and authority over all thy creatures, so thou hast an infinite power to do whatsoever thou pleasest: nothing is too hard for thee; evil men and evil angels, though they resist thy authority, cannot avoid thy power. My requests that I have here sent up unto thee, they are great requests, but yet they are all within thy power to grant; sin hath drawn a cloud and darkness over our understandings, that we cannot see thee; it hath infused a malignity into our wills, that we cannot abide thee; and how then shall we sanctify that name which we know not; or if we know, yet we hate it? But thou hast infinite power to scatter this darkness, that we may see thee, and to conquer this perverseness, that we may love and glorify thee. The prince of darkness hath set up his usurped power, and is become prince of the world, and sets up strong-holds in our hearts, and mans them with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness; but thou hast infinite power, even by a poor despised gospel, to pull down these strong-holds, to subdue those principalities and powers, to bind the strong man that keeps the house, and to set up thy throne and thy kingdom, even where Satan's seat is. The state of our nature is so changed, that we, that were once fitted for an obedience to thy will, are now become enemies to it, resisters of it, dead to the obedience of it; but thou hast infinite power by thy very word of command to quicken us, as well as to create us, to change our natures, to conform our will to the obedience of thine, that so thy will may "be done in earth as it is in heaven." Sin hath put a curse into the creature, that it hath lost much of that effectual power to support and to preserve our nature, that once it had; and it hath put a disorder into the whole creation, so that it is a wonder to see that such a world of men and creatures, amongst whom sin hath sown such a disorder and enmity, should be one able to live by another; yet thou hast power to remove that curse, to provide for the several exigencies of all thy creatures, according to their several conveniences, to feed us in times and places of necessity; to make a raven our purveyor, a cruse of oil or a barrel of meal to be a supply for three years famine. Our daily sins committed so often against so great a duty, against so many mercies, so much patience, so much love, so much bounty received from one that owes us nothing, are

enough to sin away any stock of pardoning mercy and patience below infinitude; but thou hast an unsearchable bottomless fountain of power, as well to pardon as to punish. Our temptations unto sin meet us upon every occasion, from without us and from within us, and we have no wisdom in ourselves to foresee them; no strength, nor yet any will to oppose them; but thou hast infinite power to foresee, to prevent, to divert them, and to deliver from them. The least of evils, armed with the guilt of any one sin, will, like a weight of lead, press us into an impossibility of recovery from it; the enemy of our souls is conversant within us, and about us, and ready upon every occasion to seduce us into sin, and to torment and disorder us from it; and his power and strength and subtility is beyond our power to resist; and indeed he finds us willing captives; but as thou hast authority, so thou hast power to restrain him, to discover him, to fortify and strengthen us against him, and to deliver us from him: and therefore I here lay hold of the strength of omnipotency to grant these my petitions; but this is not all:—

"And the glory." Omnipotency, though it be one addition of strength to our prayers, yet it is not enough. The leper in the gospel said truly to our Saviour, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean but yet he doth not conclude, thou canst, therefore thou wilt: but thy glory is the great end of all thy works; the end of thy great work of creation; *Prov.* xiv. 4, the end of thy Son's coming into the world to redeem mankind; *Luke* ii. 14, the end of thy eternal counsel in electing some to life, and leaving others; *Rom.* ix. 22. It is the only tribute that all thy works can give thee for their being and preservation, and that which thou accountest most dear and peculiar unto thyself. *Isa.* xlii. 8, 48, 11. "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory I will not give to another." And in all these my requests I have sought nothing but what conduceth to thy glory. In granting what I have here asked, the benefit is ours, but the glory is thine. In it thou hast the glory of thy mercy, the glory of thy power, the glory of thy bounty and goodness, the glory of thy truth and faithfulness; thou hast said of old, that thy glory shall be revealed, and that all flesh shall see it; *Isa.* xl. 5, that they shall sanctify thy name; *Isa.* xxix. 23, that thou wilt set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, and shall break in pieces and consume other kingdoms, and shall stand for ever; *Dan.* ii. 44, *Dan.* vii. 27. That thy counsel

shall stand, and thou wilt do all thy pleasure; *Isa.* xliv. 10. That thou wilt give us a new heart, and a new spirit, and will cause us to walk in thy statutes, and to keep thy judgments and do them; *Ezek.* xxxvi. 26, 27. That verily we shall be fed; *Psal.* xxxvii. 3. That though the young lions do lack and suffer hunger, yet they that seek thee shall not want any good thing; *Psal.* xxxiv. 10. That if we return unto thee thou wilt have mercy, and abundantly pardon; *Isa.* lv. 7. That thou art a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; *Exod.* xxxiv. 7. That thou wilt not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but wilt with the temptation make a way to escape; 1 *Cor.* x. 13. That if we call upon thee in the day of trouble, thou wilt deliver us, and we shall glorify thee; *Psal* l. 15. And yet though thou, the great God of power and truth, hast spoken all this, and wilt do it, yet that thou mayest have the due acknowledgment of our subjection and dependence upon thee, thou wilt be inquired of for this to do it for us; *Ezek.* xxxvi. 36, 37. And although we are so sinful, that we cannot so much as deserve thy pity in our greatest misery, yet for thy name's sake, and for thy glory's sake, hear us: *Psal.* cvi. 8. For thy own sake, *Isa.* xlviii. 11. And though all the praises and acknowledgments of thy creatures add nothing to thy glory; for thine is an essential, infinite, absolute, independent glory; yet since thou art pleased to accept of this our poor and our only tribute, and to take it in good part from thy creature, we will thankfully acknowledge thy great condescension to us in accepting of our prayers, and granting our requests, giving us liberty through thy Son to be intercessors for ourselves, for others, nay, for thine own glory and kingdom, and the manifestation of it; "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. Give me grace in all my wants and necessities to fly to thee by prayer, and in all my supplies and deliverances to return unto thee with thanksgiving.

"For ever." Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations; *Psal.* cxlv. 13. A kingdom which shall in time break and subdue all the kingdoms of this world, and the kingdom of darkness, sin, death, and Satan. And as is thy kingdom, such is thy power, infinite in extent, infinitely more comprehensive than the vastest wants or desires of thy creatures, infinite in duration, unexhaustible by all the

successions of time and of eternity itself. And as is thy kingdom and power, such is thy glory, an eternal and endless glory; before the birth of time, when nothing had a being but thyself, thou hadst infinite self-sufficiency, and an incomprehensible fulness of glory; *John* xvii. 5. And when thou didst in time create the world, it did not contribute unto thy fulness of glory, but thou didst communicate and imprint some of thy glory upon it; and all the glory that thy creatures bring unto thee, is nothing else but the reflection of thine own glory, a recoil of that beam that came from thy sun; yet though the glory of thy essence cannot receive any increase by this reflection, yet thou art pleased everlastingly to perpetuate this thy reflexive glory, by the immortal angels and spirits of just men made perfect, to whom thou wilt unto all eternity communicate a fulness of the vision of thyself, according to the measure of their perfected, but finite natures; and from that communication of thy glory to them, they shall everlastingly return glory to thy name; saying, "Blessing, honour, glory and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the lamb for ever and ever, Amen."

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

BY HENRY KIRKE WHITE.

When marshall'd on the nightly plain,
The glittering host bestud the sky;
One star alone, of all the train,
Can fix the sinner's wandering eye.

Hark! hark! to God the chorus breaks,
From every host, from every gem;
But one alone the Saviour speaks,
It is the star of Bethlehem.

Once on the raging seas I rode,
The storm was loud, the night was dark,
The ocean yawn'd—and rudely blow'd
The wind that toss'd my foundering bark.

Deep horror then my vitals froze,
Death-struck, I ceas'd the tide to stem;
When suddenly a star arose,
It was the star of Bethlehem.

It was my guide, my light, my all,
It bade my dark forebodings cease;
And through the storm and danger's thrall,
It led me to the port of peace.

Now safely moor'd—my perils o'er,
I 'll sing, first in night's diadem,
For ever and for evermore,
The star! the star of Bethlehem!

SERMON

ON

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

BY THE

REV. HUGH BLAIR, D.D., F.R.S.

Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father! the hour is come;—JOHN XVII. 1.

THESE were the words of our blessed Lord on a memorable occasion. The feast of the passover drew nigh, at which he knew he was to suffer. The night was arrived wherein he was to be delivered into the hands of his enemies. He had spent the evening in conference with his disciples; like a dying father in the midst of his family, mingling consolations with his last instructions. When he had ended his discourse to them he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and, with the words which I have now read, began that solemn prayer of intercession for the Church, which closed his ministry. Immediately after, he went forth with his disciples into the garden of Gethsemane, and surrendered himself to those who came to apprehend him.

Such was the situation of our Lord at the time of his pronouncing these words. He saw his mission on the point of being accomplished. He had the prospect full before him, of all that he was about to suffer.——Father! the hour is come. —What hour? An hour, the most critical, the most pregnant with great events, since hours had begun to be numbered, since time had begun to run. It was the hour in which the Son of God was to terminate the labours of his important life, by a death still more important and illustrious; the hour of atoning, by his sufferings, for the guilt of mankind; the hour of accomplishing prophecies, types, and symbols, which had been carried on through a series of ages; the hour of concluding the old and of introducing to the world the new dispensation of religion; the hour of his triumphing over the world, and death and hell; the hour

of his erecting that spiritual kingdom which is to last for ever. Such is the hour, such are the events, which you are to commemorate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I shall attempt to set them before you as proper subjects at this time of your devout meditation. To display them in their genuine majesty is beyond the ability of man.

1. This was the hour in which Christ was glorified by his sufferings. The whole of his life had discovered much real greatness, under a mean appearance. Through the cloud of his humiliation, his native lustre often broke forth; but never did it shine so bright, as in this last, this trying hour. It was indeed the hour of distress and of blood. He knew it to be such; and when he uttered the words of the text, he had before his eyes the executioner and the cross, the scourge, the nails, and the spear. But by prospects of this nature, his soul was not to be overcome. It is distress which enobles every great character; and distress was to glorify the Son of God. He was now to teach all mankind, by his example, how to suffer and to die. He was to stand forth before his enemies as the faithful witness of the truth; justifying by his behaviour the character which he assumed, and sealing with his blood the doctrine which he taught.

What magnanimity in all his words and actions on this great occasion! The court of Herod, the judgment hall of Pilate, the hill of Calvary, were so many theatres prepared for his displaying all the virtues of a constant and patient mind. When led forth to suffer, the first voice which we hear from him, is a generous lamentation over the fate of his unfortunate though guilty country; and, to the last moment of his life, we behold him in possession of the same gentle and benevolent spirit. No upbraiding, no complaining expression escaped from his lips during the long and painful approaches of a cruel death. He betrayed no symptom of a weak or a vulgar, of a discomposed or impatient mind. With the utmost attention of filial tenderness, he committed his aged mother to the care of his beloved disciple. See *John* xix. 26, 27. With all the dignity of a sovereign, he conferred pardon on a penitent fellow-sufferer. With a greatness of mind beyond example, he spent his last moments in apologies and prayers for those who were shedding his blood.

By wonders in heaven, and wonders on earth, was this hour distinguished. All nature seemed to feel it; and the dead and the living bore

witness to its importance. The veil of the temple was rent in twain. The earth shook. There was darkness over all the land. The graves were opened, and many who slept arose and went into the Holy City. Nor were these the only prodigies of this awful hour. The most hardened hearts were subdued and changed. The judge who, in order to gratify the multitude, passed sentence against him, publicly attested his innocence. The Roman centurion who presided at the execution, glorified God, and acknowledged the sufferer to be more than man. After he saw the things which had passed, he said, Certainly this was a righteous person; truly this was the Son of God. The Jewish malefactor who was crucified with him, addressed him as a King, and implored his favour. Even the crowd of insensible spectators, who had come forth as to a common spectacle, and who began with clamours and insults, returned home, smiting their breasts. Look back on the heroes, the philosophers, the legislators of old. View them in their last moments. Recal every circumstance which distinguished their departure from the world. Where can you find such an assemblage of high virtues, and of great events, as concurred at the death of Christ? Where, so many testimonies given to the dignity of the dying person, by earth, and by heaven?

II. This was the hour in which Christ atoned for the sins of mankind, and accomplished our eternal redemption. It was the hour when that great sacrifice was offered up, the efficacy of which reaches back to the first transgression of man, and extends forth to the end of time; the hour when, from the cross, as from an high altar, the blood was flowing, which washed away the guilt of the nations.

This awful dispensation of the Almighty contains mysteries which are beyond the discovery of man. It is one of those things into which the angels desire to look. What has been revealed to us is, That the death of Christ was the interposition of Heaven for preventing the ruin of human kind. We know, that under the government of God, misery is the natural consequence of guilt. After rational creatures had, by their criminal conduct, introduced disorder into the Divine kingdom, there was no ground to believe, that by their penitence and prayers alone they could prevent the destruction which threatened them. The prevalence of propitiatory sacrifices throughout the earth, proclaims it to be the general sense of mankind, that mere repentance was not of sufficient avail to expiate sin, or

to stop his penal effects. By the constant allusions which are carried on in the New Testament to the sacrifices under the Law, as presignifying a great atonement made by Christ; and by the strong expressions which are used in describing the effects of his death, the sacred writers show, as plainly as language allows, that there was an efficacy in his sufferings, far beyond that of mere example and instruction. The nature and extent of that efficacy we are unable, as yet, fully to trace. Part we are capable of beholding; and the wisdom of what we behold, we have reason to adore. We discern in this plan of redemption, the evil of sin strongly exhibited; and the justice of the Divine government awfully exemplified, in Christ suffering for sinners. But let us not imagine, that our present discoveries unfold the whole influence of the death of Christ. It is connected with causes into which we cannot penetrate. It produces consequences too extensive for us to explore. God's thoughts are not as our thoughts. In all things we see only in part; and here, if anywhere, we see also as through a glass darkly.

This, however, is fully manifest, that redemption is one of the most glorious works of the Almighty. If the hour of the creation of the world was great and illustrious; that hour, when, from the dark and formless mass, this fair system of nature arose at the Divine command; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy; no less illustrious is the hour of the restoration of the world; the hour when, from condemnation and misery, it emerged into happiness and peace. With less external majesty it was attended, but is, on that account, the more wonderful, that under an appearance so simple, such great events were covered.

III. In this hour the long series of prophecies, visions, types, and figures, was accomplished. This was the centre in which they all met: This the point towards which they had tended and verged, throughout the course of so many generations. You behold the Law and the Prophets standing, if we may speak so, at the foot of the cross, and doing homage. You behold Moses and Aaron bearing the ark of the covenant; David and Elijah presenting the oracle of testimony. You behold all the priests and sacrifices, all the rites and ordinances, all the types and symbols, assembled together to receive their consummation. Without the death of Christ, the worship and ceremonies of the Law would have remained a pompous, but unmeaning

institution. In the hour when he was crucified the book with the seven seals was opened. Every rite assumed its significancy; every prediction met its event; every symbol displayed its correspondence.

The dark, and seemingly ambiguous method of conveying important discoveries under figures and emblems, was not peculiar to the sacred books. The spirit of God, in pre-signifying the death of Christ, adopted that plan according to which the whole knowledge of those early ages was propagated through the world. Under the veil of mysterious allusion, all wisdom was then concealed. From the sensible world, images were everywhere borrowed, to describe things unseen. More was understood to be meant than was openly expressed. By enigmatical rites, the Priest communicated his doctrines; by parables and allegories, the Philosopher instructed his disciples; even the Legislator, by figurative sayings, commanded the reverence of the people. Agreeably to this prevailing mode of instruction, the whole dispensation of the Old Testament was so conduced as to be the shadow and the figure of a spiritual system. Every remarkable event, every distinguished personage, under the Law, is interpreted in the New Testament, as bearing some reference to the hour of which we treat. If Isaac was laid upon the altar as an innocent victim; if David was driven from his throne by the wicked, and restored by the hand of God; if the brazen serpent was lifted up to heal the people; if the rock was smitten by Moses, to furnish drink in the wilderness; all were types of Christ, and alluded to his death.

In predicting the same event the language of ancient prophecy was magnificent, but seemingly contradictory: for it foretold a Messiah, who was to be at once a sufferer and a conqueror. The Star was to come out of Jacob, and the Branch to spring from the stem of Jesse. The Angel of the Covenant, the Desire of all Nations, was to come suddenly to his temple: and to him was to be the gathering of the people. Yet at the same time, he was to be despised and rejected of men; he was to be taken from prison and from judgment, and to be led as a lamb to the slaughter. Though he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, yet the Gentiles were to come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising. In the hour when Christ died, those prophetical riddles were solved; those seeming contradictions were reconciled. The obscurity of oracles, and the ambiguity

of types vanished. The sun of righteousness rose; and together with the dawn of religion, those shadows passed away.

This was the hour of the abolition of the Law, and the introduction of the Gospel; the hour of terminating the old, and of beginning the new dispensation of religious knowledge and worship throughout the earth. Viewed in this light it forms the most august era which is to be found in the history of mankind. When Christ was suffering on the cross, we are informed by one of the Evangelists that he said, "I thirst:" and that they filled a sponge with vinegar and put it to his mouth. After he had tasted the vinegar, knowing that all things were now accomplished, and the scriptures fulfilled, he said, "It is finished." *John* xix, 28, 29, 30: that is, This offered draught of vinegar was the last circumstance predicted by an ancient prophet, *Psal.* lxiv. 21, that remained to be fulfilled. The vision and the prophecy are now sealed. The Mosaic dispensation is closed. And he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.

"It is finished." When he uttered these words, he changed the state of the universe. At that moment the Law ceased, and the Gospel commenced. This was the ever-memorable point of time which separated the old and the new world from each other. On one side of the point of separation, you behold the Law with its priests, its sacrifices, and its rites, retiring from sight. On the other side, you behold the Gospel, with its simple and venerable institutions, coming forward into view. Significantly was the veil of the temple rent in this hour; for the glory then departed from between the cherubim. The legal High Priest delivered up his Urim and Thummim, his breastplate, his robes, and his incense: and Christ stood forth as the great High Priest of all succeeding generations. By that one sacrifice which he now offered, he abolished sacrifices for ever. Altars on which the fire had blazed for ages, were now to smoke no more. Victims were no more to bleed. Not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with his own blood, he now entered into the Holy Place, there to appear in the presence of God for us.

This was the hour of association and union to all the worshippers of God. When Christ said, "It is finished," he threw down the wall of partition which had so long divided the Gentile from the Jew. He gathered into one all the faithful out of every kindred and people. He proclaimed the hour to be come, when the knowledge of the true

God should be no longer confined to one nation, nor his worship to one temple; but over all the earth, the worshippers of the Father should serve him in spirit and in truth. From that hour they who dwelt in the uttermost ends of the earth, strangers to the covenant of promise, began to be brought nigh. In that hour, the light of the Gospel dawned from afar on the British islands.

During a long course of ages, providence seemed to be occupied in preparing the world for this revolution. The whole Jewish economy was intended to usher it in. The knowledge of God was preserved unextinguished in one corner of the world, that thence in due time might issue forth the light which was to overspread the earth. Successive revelations gradually enlarged the views of men beyond the narrow bounds of Judea, to a more extensive kingdom of God. Signs and miracles awakened their expectation, and directed their eyes towards this great event. Whether God descended on the flaming mountain, or spoke by the prophet's voice; whether he scattered his chosen people into captivity, or reassembled them in their own land; he was still carrying on a progressive plan, which was accomplished at the death of Christ.

Not only in the territories of Israel, but over all the earth, the great dispensations of providence respected the approach of this important hour. If empires rose or fell; if war divided, or peace united the nations; if learning civilized their manners, or philosophy enlarged their views; all was by the secret decree of heaven made to ripen the world for that fulness of time, when Christ was to publish the whole counsel of God. The Persian, the Macedonian, the Roman conqueror, entered upon the stage, each at his predicted period; and though he meant not so, neither did his heart think so, ministered to this hour. The revolutions of power, and the succession of monarchies, were so arranged by providence, as to facilitate the progress of the Gospel through the habitable world, after the day had arrived, when the stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands, should become a great mountain, and fill the earth, *Dan.* ii. 34. 35. This was the day which Abraham saw afar off, and was glad. This was the day which many prophets and kings and righteous men desired to see, but could not; the day for which the earnest expectation of the creature, long oppressed with ignorance, and bewildered in superstition, might be justly said to wait.

V. This was the hour of Christ's triumph over all the powers of darkness; the hour in which he overthrew dominions and thrones, led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. The contest which the kingdom of darkness had long maintained against the kingdom of light, was now brought to its crisis. The period was come when the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. For many ages the most gross superstition had filled the earth. The glory of the uncorruptible God was everywhere, except in the land of Judea, changed into images made like to corruptible man, and to birds and beasts and creeping things. The world which the Almighty created for himself seemed to have become a temple of idols. Even to vices and passions altars were raised; and what was entitled religion was in effect a discipline of impurity. In the midst of this universal darkness, Satan had erected his throne; and the learned and polished, as well as the savage nations, bowed down before him. But at the hour when Christ appeared on the cross, the signal of his defeat was given. His kingdom suddenly departed from him; the reign of idolatry passed away; he was beheld to fall like lightning from heaven. In that hour, the foundation of every Pagan temple shook. The statue of every false God tottered on its base. The priest fled from his falling shrine; and the heathen oracles became dumb for ever.

As on the cross Christ triumphed over Satan, so he overcame his auxiliary the world. Long had it assailed him with its temptations and discouragements. In this hour of severe trial, he surmounted them all. Formerly he had despised the pleasures of the world. He now baffled its terrors. Hence he is justly said to have crucified the world.

By his sufferings he enobled distress; and he darkened the lustre of the pomp and vanities of life. He discovered to his followers the path which leads through affliction to glory and to victory; and he imparted to them the same spirit which enabled him to overcome. "My kingdom is not of this world. In this world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." *John* xvi. 33.

Death also, the last foe of man, was the victim of this hour. The formidable appearance of the spectre remained, but his dart was taken away. For in the hour when Christ expiated guilt, he disarmed death, by securing the resurrection of the just. When he said to his penitent fellow-sufferer, "To-day thou shalt

be with me in Paradise," he announced to all his followers the certainty of heavenly bliss. He declared the cherubim to be dismissed, and the flaming sword to be sheathed, which had been appointed at the fall, to keep from man the way of the tree of life. *Gen.* iii. 24. Faint before this period had been the hope, indistinct the prospect, which even good men enjoyed of the heavenly kingdom. Life and immortality were now brought to light. From the hill of Calvary, the first clear and certain view was given to the world of the everlasting mansions. Since that hour, they have been the perpetual consolation of believers in Christ. Under trouble they soothe their minds; amidst temptation they support their virtue; and in their dying moments, enable them to say, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?"

VI. This was the hour when our Lord erected that spiritual kingdom which is never to end. How vain are the counsels and designs of men! How shallow is the policy of the wicked! How short their triumphing! The enemies of Christ imagined, that in this hour they had successfully accomplished their plan for his destruction. They believed that they had entirely scattered the small party of his followers, and had extinguished his name and his honour for ever. In derision they addressed him as a king. They clothed him with purple robes; they crowned him with a crown of thorns; they put a reed into his hand; and with insulting mockery, bowed the knee before him. Blind and impious men! How little did they know that the Almighty was at that moment setting him as a King on the hill of Sion; giving him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession! How little did they know, that their badges of mock royalty were at that moment converted into the signals of absolute dominion, and the instruments of irresistible power. The reed which they put into his hands became a rod of iron, with which he was to break in pieces his enemies; a sceptre, with which he was to rule the universe in righteousness. The cross, which they thought was to stigmatize him with infamy, became the ensign of his renown. Instead of being the reproach of his followers, it was to be their boast and their glory. The cross was to shine on palaces and churches, throughout the earth. It was to be assumed as the distinction of the most powerful monarchs, and to wave in the banners of victorious armies, when the memory of Herod and Pilate

should be accursed; when Jerusalem should be reduced to ashes, and the Jews be vagabonds over the world.

These were the triumphs which commenced at this hour. Our Lord saw them already in their birth; he saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied. He beheld the word of God going forth, conquering and to conquer; subduing to the obedience of his laws the subduers of the world; carrying light into the regions of darkness, and mildness into the habitations of cruelty. He beheld the Gentiles waiting below the cross, to receive the Gospel. He beheld Ethiopia and the Isles stretching out their hands to God: the desert beginning to rejoice, and to blossom as the rose; and the knowledge of the Lord filling the earth, as the waters cover the sea. Well pleased he said, "It is finished." As a conqueror, he retired from the field reviewing his triumphs: he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. From that hour, Christ was no longer a mortal man, but Head over all things to the Church; the glorious king of men and angels, of whose dominion there shall be no end. His triumphs shall perpetually increase. His name shall endure for ever; it shall last as long as the sun; men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed.

Such were the transactions, such the effects of this ever memorable hour. With all those great events was the mind of our Lord filled, when he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour is come."

From this view which we have taken of this subject, permit me to suggest, what ground it affords to confide in the mercy of God for the pardon of sin; we trust to his faithfulness for the accomplishment of all his promises; and to approach to him with gratitude and devotion in acts of worship.

In the first place, the death of Christ affords us ground to confide in the Divine mercy, for the pardon of sin. All the steps of that high dispensation of providence, which we have considered, lead directly to this conclusion, he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? *Rom.* viii. 32. This is the final result of the discoveries of the Gospel. On this rests that great system of consolation, which it hath reared up for men. We are not left to dubious and intricate reasonings, concerning the conduct which God may be expected to hold towards his offending creatures, but we are led to the view of important and illustrious facts, which strike the mind with

evidence irresistible. For, is it possible to believe that such great operations as I have endeavoured to describe were carried on by the Almighty in vain? Did he excite in the hearts of his creatures such encouraging hopes, without any intention to fulfil them? After so long a preparation of goodness, could he mean to deny forgiveness to the penitent and the humble? When, overcome by the sense of guilt, man looks up with an astonished eye to the justice of his Creator, let him recollect that hour of which the text speaks, and be comforted. The signals of Divine mercy erected in his view are too conspicuous to be either distrusted or mistaken.

In the next place. The discoveries of this hour afford the highest reason to trust in the Divine faithfulness, for the accomplishment of every promise which remains yet unfulfilled. For this was the hour of the completion of God's ancient covenant. It was the performance of the mercy promised to the Fathers. We behold the consummation of a great plan, which, throughout a course of ages, had been uniformly pursued; and which, against every human appearance, was, at the appointed moment, exactly fulfilled. No word that is gone out of the mouth of the Lord shall fail. No length of time alters his purpose. No obstacles can retard it. Towards the ends accomplished in this hour, the most repugnant instruments were made to operate. We discern God bending to his purpose the jarring passions, the opposite interests, and even the vices of men; uniting seeming contrarieties in his scheme; making the wrath of man to praise him; obliging the ambition of Princes, the prejudices of the Jews, the malice of Satan, all to concur, either in bringing forward this hour, or in completing its destined effects. With what entire confidence ought we to wait for the fulfilment of all his other promises in their due time; even when events are most embroiled, and the prospect is most discouraging? Although thou sayest, Thou canst not see him; yet judgment is before him; and therefore trust thou in him. Be attentive only to perform thy duty; leave the event to God; and be assured that, under the direction of his Providence, all things shall work together for a happy issue.

Lastly, The consideration of this whole subject tends to excite gratitude and devotion, when we approach to God in acts of worship. The hour of which I have discoursed presents him to us in the amiable light of the Deliverer

of mankind, the Restorer of our forfeited hopes. We behold the greatness of the Almighty, softened by the mild radiance of condescension and mercy. We behold him diminishing the awful distance at which we stand from his presence, by appointing for us a Mediator and Intercessor, through whom the humble may, without dismay, approach to Him who made them. By such views of the Divine nature, Christian faith lays the foundation for a worship which shall be at once rational and affectionate; a worship in which the light of the understanding shall concur with the devotion of the heart, and the most profound reverence be united with the most cordial love. Christian faith is not a system of speculative truths. It is not a lesson of moral instruction only. By a train of high discoveries which it reveals, by a succession of interesting objects which it places in our view, it is calculated to elevate the mind, to purify the affections, and, by the assistance of devotion, to confirm and encourage virtue. Such, in particular, is the scope of that divine institution, the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper. To this happy purpose let it conduce, by concentering, in one striking point of light, all that the Gospel has displayed of what is most important to man. Touched with just contrition for past offences, and filled with a grateful sense of Divine goodness, let us come to the altar of God; and with a humble faith in his infinite mercies devote ourselves to his service for ever.

SERMON

ON

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

And he led them out as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven.—
Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

THE sacred Scriptures not only set before us a complete rule of life, but give weight and authority to the precepts thy deliver, by the information they communicate of certain great and important facts, in which all the human race have a deep concern. Of those facts, one of the most illustrious is the ascension of our Saviour to heaven, after having completed the work of our redemption. This is a subject on which it is at all times pleasing to a Christian to meditate; but especially after the celebration of that solemn ordinance in which we were this day engaged. We there renewed the memorial of our Saviour suffering and dying in the cause of mankind. Let us now take part in his succeeding triumphs. Let us with pleasure behold him rising from the grave, as the conqueror of death and hell, and ascending into heaven, there to reign in glory, and to act as the protector and guardian of his people, to the end of time.—It will be proper to begin with taking a particular view of all the circumstances that attended this memorable event in the history of our Saviour's life; as they are related in the text, compared with the accounts of other evangelists. The circumstances will all be found to be both beautiful and sublime in themselves, and instructive to us.

We are informed, *Acts* i. 3, that it was not until forty days after his resurrection from the grave that this event took place. During this space he had shown himself alive, after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being often seen by his disciples, and conversing with them of things pertaining to the kingdom of God. All being now concluded which he had to do on earth; the guilt of mankind having been expiated by his death, and his apostles fully instructed in

the part they were henceforth to act, and the character they were to assume; one day, we are told, he led them out of the city as far as to Bethany.—With the utmost propriety was this place selected for the scene of his ascension. Near Bethany was the Mount of Olives, to which our Lord was wont so often to retire for the exercise of private devotion; and there also was the garden of Gethsemane, where his sufferings commenced with that with that agony, in which his "soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." At the spot where his generous sufferings on our account began, there also was his glory to commence; and those fields which had so long been his favourite retreat, and so often had been consecrated by him to meditation and prayer, were now to be dignified with his last and parting steps towards heaven; a sort of symbol of devotion and virtuous sufferings being steps that prepare for ascent to heaven.—There, we are told, "He lift up his hands and blessed his disciples; and while he blessed them, he was parted from them." How beautiful is this attitude of our departing Lord! How well did such a conclusion suit the rest of his life! "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end." While he lived, "he went about doing good:" he died praying for his enemies; and when he ascended into heaven, it was in the act of lifting up his hands and blessing his friends; like a dying parent giving his last benediction to his children and family. A worthy pattern is here set before us, of the manner in which every good man should wish to spend his last moments, in acts of devotion to God, and expressions of kindness and affection to his friends.—While our Saviour was thus employed, he was parted from his disciples; a cloud, it is said, received him out of their sight, *Acts* i. 9. and he was carried up into heaven. Here were no whirlwinds, no thunders, no chariots of fire. Supernatural appearances of old had been accompanied with majesty of a terrible kind. The law was given in the midst of lightning and thunders. Elijah was caught up into heaven in a fiery chariot. But the Saviour of the world was gently received up in a cloud; with that sort of meek and calm magnificence which bespeaks the peaceful genius of the gospel and its Author.—Angels likewise assisted at this solemnity, as in every dispensation friendly to mankind these benevolent spirits are represented as taking part. At the creation of the world, the morning stars, it is said, sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. *Job.* xxxviii. 7. At the

birth of our Lord, we hear of their songs of praise and joy; we find them present at his resurrection from the dead; and now again at his ascension into heaven. "While his disciples looked steadfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," *Acts* i. 10, 11.

Such were the circumstances which accompanied that great and signal event of Christ's ascension into heaven; all of them very solemn and striking, and calculated to leave a deep impression on the minds of his disciples.—Let us now proceed to consider the ends and purposes of our Saviour's ascension, as far as they are revealed and made known to us; and together with them, the effects which ought thereby to be produced on our minds.

In the first place, by our Saviour's ascension into heaven, it was made to appear that the great design for which he descended to the earth was completely fulfilled. A solemn attestation was thus given by God, to the virtue and efficacy of that great sacrifice which he offered by his death for the sins of the world: it was declared, that in consideration of the high merits and generous sufferings of the Son of God, pardon and grace were to be extended to the fallen race of men. Therefore, "God raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might stand in God."

Hence, the ascension of our Lord is to be considered as a display from heaven of the olive-branch to mankind. It is a most august ratification of that covenant of grace on which are founded all our hopes of acceptance with God. We lay under the sentence of condemnation as an offending guilty race, till Christ undertook our cause, and by his resurrection and ascension proved that he succeeded in what he had undertaken. As soon as he was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God, the terrors of the law were withdrawn. Ancient prophecies were fulfilled, which represented the coming of the Messiah as the renovation of the world, as the era of declared grace and peace to mankind. The ascension of Christ was the signal of his triumph over all the powers of darkness. Long they had meditated our ruin, and maintained the reign of idolatry among the nations. But the period was now come when their power was to be overthrown. When Christ, as it was predicted of old by the inspired

Psalmist, "ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." He then spoiled principalities and powers. *Colos.* ii. 15. He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; *Heb.* ii. 14; and the gifts which, as tokens of victory, he bestowed among his followers, were no less than peace, pardon, and eternal life: while our Lord's ascension thus serves to establish our faith in the gospel.

It is, in the next place, to be viewed by us with respect to Christ himself, as a merited restoration to his original felicity. As the Son of God, all glory belonged to him for ever. The divine nature could neither suffer any real depression, nor receive any additional advancement. But it was as a man that he appeared and acted on the earth; that he suffered and died. What he had done in that character, entitled him as a man to the highest rewards. Accordingly, it is in this view of merited recompence, that his ascension and exaltation at the right hand of God is always set forth in Scripture. Because "he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow—and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."—*Phil.* ii. 7, &c. In this constitution of providence, an illustrious testimony was designed to be given of God's regard and love to eminent righteousness. We see Jesus, as the apostle speaks, "for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour." *Heb.* ii. 9. We see signal pre-eminence made the reward of signal condescension for the sake of mankind; and self-abasement and humiliation made the road to glory. We are taught, in this great instance, that God never deserts the cause that is his own, nor leaves worth and piety to be finally oppressed; though for a while he may allow trials and hardships to be undergone by the best men. No person could appear more neglected and forsaken by God than our Saviour was for a season, when in the hands of his foes. Important purposes of Providence were during the season carried on; but as soon as these purposes were accomplished, God came forth in support of righteousness and truth, and by the high honours bestowed on Christ, established his eternal triumph over all his foes.

While we thus view our Saviour's

ascension as a glorification justly merited on his own account, we cannot but on our own part highly rejoice in it from a sense of the obligations we lie under to him. Devoid of every just and honourable sentiment must he be, who partakes not with cordial satisfaction in the success and triumph of a generous benefactor, who for his sake has exposed himself to much distress and danger. In that holy sacrament which we this day celebrated, we beheld our blessed Saviour despised and rejected of men, we saw him treated as the vilest of malefactors, led to the hill of Golgotha with scorn and contempt, and there undergoing all that the cruelty of his enemies could contrive to inflict. All this we beheld him patiently and cheerfully enduring for our sake, in order to accomplish our redemption.—Now, when at his next appearance we behold such a glorious revolution; when we behold him rising from the dead, ascending into the highest heavens, sitting down there at the right hand of God, and all things in heaven and earth made to bow before him; shall not we, my brethren, with thankful and devout hearts, partake joyfully in his exaltation and felicity?—Thou, O Divine Benefactor! O illustrious Restorer of the lost hopes and happiness of mankind! thou art most worthy to be thus raised above all beings. Our sorrows once were thine. "For our transgressions thou wert bruised; and for our iniquities wounded." Now in thy joy we rejoice; and in thine honours we triumph. We with lifted hands will ever bless thee prostrate at thy feet; we will join with all the heavenly host in celebrating thy praises; in ascribing to "Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," all power, and glory, and dominion for ever.

In the third place Christ ascended into heaven that he might act there, in the presence of God, as our High-priest and Intercessor. This office which he performs was pre-signified under the Jewish dispensation by the high-priest entering once every year on the great day of atonement into the holiest place in the temple, and there sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice before the mercy-seat. "But Christ being come, a High-priest, of good things to come by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered at once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us; he is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for

us.—There we are told, "he ever liveth to make intercession for his people."—*Heb.* ix. 11, 12, 24. vii. 25. By his appearing in the human nature while he is acting as intercessor for mankind, an everlasting memorial is presented to the Almighty of the Redeemer's love to men. That sacrifice which was offered on Mount Calvary, still continues to ascend before the throne; and that blood which was shed on the cross, flows for ever in the sight of God.

Concerning the nature of this intercession, which our Saviour is represented as making in heaven, and his continuing to appear in the human nature for that purpose, I am aware that difficulties and objections may be raised by some. I readily admit that the whole doctrine revealed to us in Scripture relating to the incarnation of Christ, the atonement made by his death, and the nature of his intercession for us in heaven, is of a mysterious kind. It is what we can comprehend in a very imperfect manner; and when we attempt too particularly to explain or discuss any of these doctrines, we are apt to darken counsel by words without knowledge. *Job* xxxviii. 2. Let us not, however, imagine that the mysterious nature of those doctrines furnishes any just objection against the truth of the Christian revelation. It must be considered, that this revelation professes to give such a discovery of the spiritual invisible world, and of the administration of the divine government, as was proper to be at present communicated to us. In such a revelation of things invisible and divine, and which stretch far beyond the reach of human knowledge or capacity, it was naturally to be expected that matters would occur, which should be mysterious and incomprehensible by us. Indeed, it would have been strange and incredible if it had been otherwise; if nothing had appeared on such subjects, but what was level to our apprehension. In the present material system, in the midst of which we live, and where the objects that surround us are continually exposed to the examination of our senses, how many things occur that are mysterious and unaccountable? The philosopher, age after age, has continued his researches into matter. After all his researches, will he at this day refuse to acknowledge that, in material substances, qualities have been discovered, powers and properties have been found, which it is beyond his power to reconcile to the commonly received laws and operations of matter, and which he cannot bring within the compass of any established system and theory? Shall

this philosopher then, who finds himself so often baffled in his inquiries, by meeting with wonders in matter which he cannot explain, presume to reject a religious system merely because, in treating of an invisible world, and the administration of government there carried on by the Father of Spirits, particulars occur which appear incomprehensible to him?—My brethren, let us be a little more humble and sober in our attempts to philosophise. Let us be thankful, that having received a revelation, which, upon rational grounds, stands well attested and confirmed, the mysterious doctrines which occur in it are all of them such as to be perfectly reconcileable with godliness and virtue; nay, such as have a direct tendency to promote the moral influence of virtue on the lives of men; and to bring powerful consolation to them under many troubles.

This is remarkably exemplified in that doctrine of which we are now treating, of the office performed by our Lord upon his ascension into heaven. A mediator and intercessor with God is what most nations and religions have anxiously sought to obtain. It has been at all times the favourite wish and hope of men; and from their earnestness to have this wish gratified, they contrived some form or other of mediation and intercession, on which they rested; some favourite hero, or saint, or tutelary subordinate god, through whose intervention they sought to obtain favour from the Supreme Governor of the universe. This is an idea which we find prevailing under most of the modes of Pagan worship. Men were generally sensible that they were guilty of offences against the Deity; that their own services were insufficient to appease him; and that therefore they had no title to expect his favour, unless some mediator of high merit was to espouse their interest and plead their cause. This relief, which the bewildered nations sought after in vain, is fully afforded us by the gospel of Christ. A real mediator is there revealed, invested with such characters as give encouragement and satisfaction to every pious worshipper. The divine nature of which he is possessed gives infinite merit and efficacy to every cause which he undertakes; and his possessing, at the same time, the human nature, gives us the justest ground to trust, that with compassion and tenderness he undertakes the cause of mankind.

The discovery therefore of Christ's acting as our Intercessor in heaven, is in the highest degree favourable to religion and virtue. It is so far from being a doctrine repugnant to the reason, or to the natural ideas and notions of mankind, that it ac-

cords, as has been observed, in the general view of it, with what has ever been their wish and their hope; and the evangelical discovery of the true Mediator, while it banishes all the superstition and idolatry which heathen ignorance had attached to a mediatory worship, fulfills to Christians every purpose both of encouragement and consolation. It encourages the humble virtuous man, who might be apt to look up with distrust to the awful Majesty of heaven. It brings consolation to the penitent returning sinner, from the belief that, unworthy as he is in himself, Christ the Saviour is worthy, by his powerful intercession, to procure his salvation.—What plan of religion could have been given more suited than this to the circumstances of man, in his present state of weakness and infirmity? What is more animating to every sincere worshipper?—Let us study to do our best, and if our endeavours be faithful, and our hearts be upright, we have an advocate with the Father in heaven, on whose intercession we can rely; one who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God through him. We have not a high-priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." *Heb.* vii. 25. iv. 15, 16.

In the last place, our Saviour ascended into heaven in order to exercise there the office of our King, as well as of our High-priest and Intercessor. His ascension was a solemn investiture in that royal authority with which he was to act as "Head of the Church" till the end of time. All power in heaven and earth was committed to him. In token of his being the sovereign of both worlds, in triumph he rose from his earthly grave, and in triumph ascended into heaven. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made him both Lord and Christ." *Acts* ii. 36. "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." *Psal.* ii. 6. 8.

This view of our Lord's ascension and exaltation obviously commands from all Christians the most profound reverence and submission. No longer let the humble appearance he made on earth vilify him to our apprehension. Never let the consideration of his grace and goodness as our Intercessor in heaven be separated from the thoughts of that awful majesty with which his ascen-

sion clothes him. With impunity none can offend him. If all the heavenly hosts adore him, if the whole universe obey him, what must be the fate of those, who, being of all creatures the most highly indebted to his goodness, revolt against his government, and refuse obedience to his laws?

But while with awe and reverence the ascension and regal character of our Saviour is fitted to inspire us, it communicates also the highest satisfaction and comfort to our hearts. "Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." *Psal.* cxlix. 2. They have a Sovereign to whose protection they can with firm trust commit all their interests in life and death. There is no temptation under which his grace cannot be sufficient for them; no distress, from which it is not in his power to deliver them; no darkness but he can enlighten by a ray sent down from his eternal throne. "Lo! I am with you always even to the end of the world." *Matt.* xxviii. 20. From that eminence of celestial glory in which he resides, he beholds and remarks whatever is carried on throughout all his dominions. No secret conspiracy can escape his view; no fraud of wicked men or evil spirits can baffle his designs. "The heathen may rage, and the people imagine a vain thing. Kings of the earth may set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed. But he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." As his watchful eye is ever open to observe, so his almighty arm is ever extended to guard his church and people.—The same characters of wisdom and power, of justice and mercy, which we ascribe to the providence and dominion of God the Father, belong, in their fullest extent, to the kingdom and government of Christ the Son of God. This peculiar satisfaction his government affords us, that in the midst of sovereign authority, we know that he still retains the same mild and compassionate spirit which he showed as our High-priest. The meanest of his subjects is not overlooked by him. The inhabitant of the most obscure cottage, equally as the possessor of the most splendid palace, dwells under his protection. He listens to the prayer of the poor, and despises not the services they yield him. The widows' mite is in his sight an acceptable offering; and even a cup of cold water given to a disciple in his name passes not without its reward.—Hence the characters of his regal administration cannot be better described than in the beautiful language of the prophetical Psalmist; "He shall judge

the people with righteousness, and the poor with judgment. The righteous shall flourish in his days. He shall save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor. He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. His name shall endure for ever. It shall be continued as long as the sun. Men shall be blessed in him; and all nations shall call him blessed." *Psal.* lxxii.

We have now under several views considered the ascension of Christ, and the important purposes which were answered by it. In going along, I have pointed out some of the chief effects which ought to be produced on us by this object of our faith. Much more might be said on this subject, did the bounds of a discourse permit it. One improvement of the subject which the sacred writers often point out, must not be forgotten. "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth." *Col.* iii. 1, 2. A certain conformity with Christ, their great leader, in all the circumstances of his history, is in Scripture exacted from Christians. As they must die with him to sin, they must rise with him unto newness of life; and with him ascend in heart to heaven and dwell in their affections where he is. The elevated hopes which Christ, by his resurrection and ascension, has set before us, ought to inspire Christians with suitable elevation of sentiment above this present world.—As Christ "is in you the hope of glory, let every one who hath this hope in him, purify himself as Christ is pure." 1 *John* iii. 3. Let not the corrupt pleasures of this world debase you. Let not its terrors deject you. But in your whole conduct let that dignity and equanimity appear, which belongs to those who have such high connexions. Christ, as your forerunner, hath entered into the highest heavens; Him, it is your part to follow, in the paths of piety and and virtue. In those paths proceed with perseverance and constancy, animated by those words of your parting Redeemer, which ought ever to dwell in your remembrance; "Go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God. In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." *John* xx. 17. xiv. 2, 3.

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Death's.
I am the resurrection
and the life.
John XI. 25.



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every purpose under the

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